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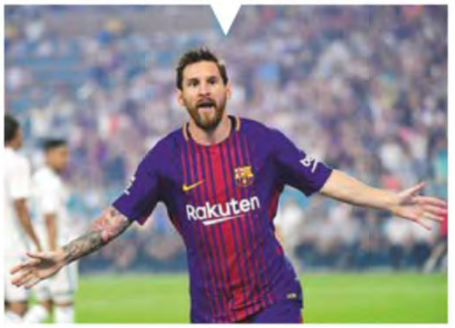

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JAPAN...Keita Suzuki poses with supporters after his testimonial game at the Saitama Stadium

USA...Jozy Altidore of the United States celebrates scoring against Jamaica in the Gold Cup Final

HUNGARY...Midtjylland's Paul Onuachu outjumps Leandro and Bence Batik of Ferencvaros in their Europa League qualifier

HOLLAND...Holland's Lieke Martens at the Women's Euro 2017 tournament

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FROM THE EDITOR

Ah, the hazards of monthly deadlines! As this issue of *World Soccer* was going to press, Paris Saint-Germain announced that they had agreed the world-record transfer of Neymar from Barcelona.

The deal provided plenty of ammunition for outraged columnists who tend to only stray into football during the silly summer season.

The transfer was extraordinary in so many ways, but it is not the end of football as we know it. The transfer window will close at the end of the month and the game will carry on. And football's richest clubs will continue to find ways to bypass financial fairplay regulations.

> Neymar's transfer was extraordinary in so many ways, but it is not the end of football as we know it

What does set the Neymar deal apart is its intensely "political" nature. It was a move negotiated by and for an entire country, not a club. It reinforced the argument of the many observers who believe that Qatari money has corrupted the world game.

PSG's move for Neymar will generate stories and headlines for months to come – not least the further transfers likely to be sparked by the deal and to which we will return next month.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 PSG pay world-record fee for Neymar p11
2 Spanish FA boss Villar in jail p10
3 Chuck Blazer dies p14
4 USA win Gold Cup p89
5 Bonucci switches from Juve to Milan p44
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8 Ajax struck by tragedy p42
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10 Russia coach Cherchesov under pressure p64

SPAIN

Arrested ...Villar

Disgraced Villar quits UEFA and FIFA posts

Angel Maria Villar, one of the most powerful men in world football, has resigned from his positions with UEFA and FIFA after being arrested in Spain on suspicion of corruption.

The 67-year-old stepped down as vice-president of UEFA and as a member of its executive committee, as well as quitting as the senior vice-president of FIFA.

Villar was arrested in Spain in an investigation into suspected corruption connected to his position as president of the Spanish football federation (see page 52).

His son, Gorka Villar, was also among four football officials arrested. The four were detained on allegations of collusion, embezzlement and falsifying documents.

Spain's government also suspended Villar as president of the Spanish football federation.

In 2015 he was fined and warned by FIFA's ethics committee for failing to co-operate with an investigation into the bidding race for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

"It's the result of my non-stop work on the pitch. I never went in for half-measures even when I wasn't 100 per cent fit"

Ex-Argentina striker Gabriel Batistuta reveals to FIFA.com that he has trouble walking these days

FRANCE

PSG pay record fee

Neymar became the world's most expensive footballer after Paris Saint-Germain paid the €222millon to release the Brazilian from his contract with Barcelona.

Neymar said: "I am extremely happy to join Paris Saint-Germain. Since I arrived in Europe, the club has always been one of the most competitive and most ambitious. And the biggest challenge, what most motivated me to join my new team-mates, is to help the club to conquer the titles that their fans want.

"From today, I will do everything I can to help my new team-mates, to open up new horizons for my club and to bring happiness to its millions of supporters around the world."

Neymar signed a five-year deal with PSG and at £198m, the fee was more than double the previolus record of £89m, which Manchester United paid Juventus for Paul Pogba in 2016.

Happy...Neymar

HEROES & VILLAINS

Shock...Niederkorn stunned Rangers in Europe

PROGRES NIEDERKORN

Without a win in 13 previous matches in European competition, and with a record of just one goal scored and 42 conceded, the Luxembourg side knocked Scotland's Rangers out of the Europa League qualifiers.

ATHLETIC BILBAO

In a show of solidaity with team-mate Yeray, who is suffering from cancer, players at the Spanish club shaved their heads. The 22-year-old defender was diagnosed with testicular cancer in December and had an operation to remove the tumour before returning to first-team football in February. However, medical checks in June revealed the disease had returned and the under-21 international had to begin chemotherapy.

ALPHONSO DAVIES

At just 16 years 247 days, the Ghanaian-born winger – who became a Canadian citizen little more than a month eralier – scored twice against French Guiana at the Gold Cup to become the first player born in the 2000s to score at a major international tournament.

Young... Davies

CHRISTIAN HEIDEL

With players being extremely well-rewarded financially, fines are easily payable. So Schalke's sporting executive came up with the novel way of punishing those who break club rules: making them work in the club shop. "You can't really hurt the lads with fines," says Christian Heidel. "We have the leisure-time punishment – and it might happen that players work in the club shop on their free day instead of getting fined."

SOLOMON NYANTAKYI

The Italian-born former Parma player of Ghanaian descent pleaded guilty to the murder of his 45-year-old mother and 11-year-old sister, having stabbed them both several times.

Murder... Nyantakyi

HENRY ROMERO

The El Salvador player bit USA's Jozy Altidore and attempted to "twist" his nipples in their Gold Cup encounter.

ANTONIO CASSANO

The 35-year-old striker ended a year out of the game by joining newly promoted Italian side Verona. However, eight days later he changed his mind and said he was retiring – only to reverse that decision a few hours afterwards. Then, after promising fans that he was fully committed to the club for the 2017-18 season, he walked away, saying: "After thinking and reflecting, in the end I decided Antonio Cassano will not play football anymore."

JUAN CARLOS OSORIO

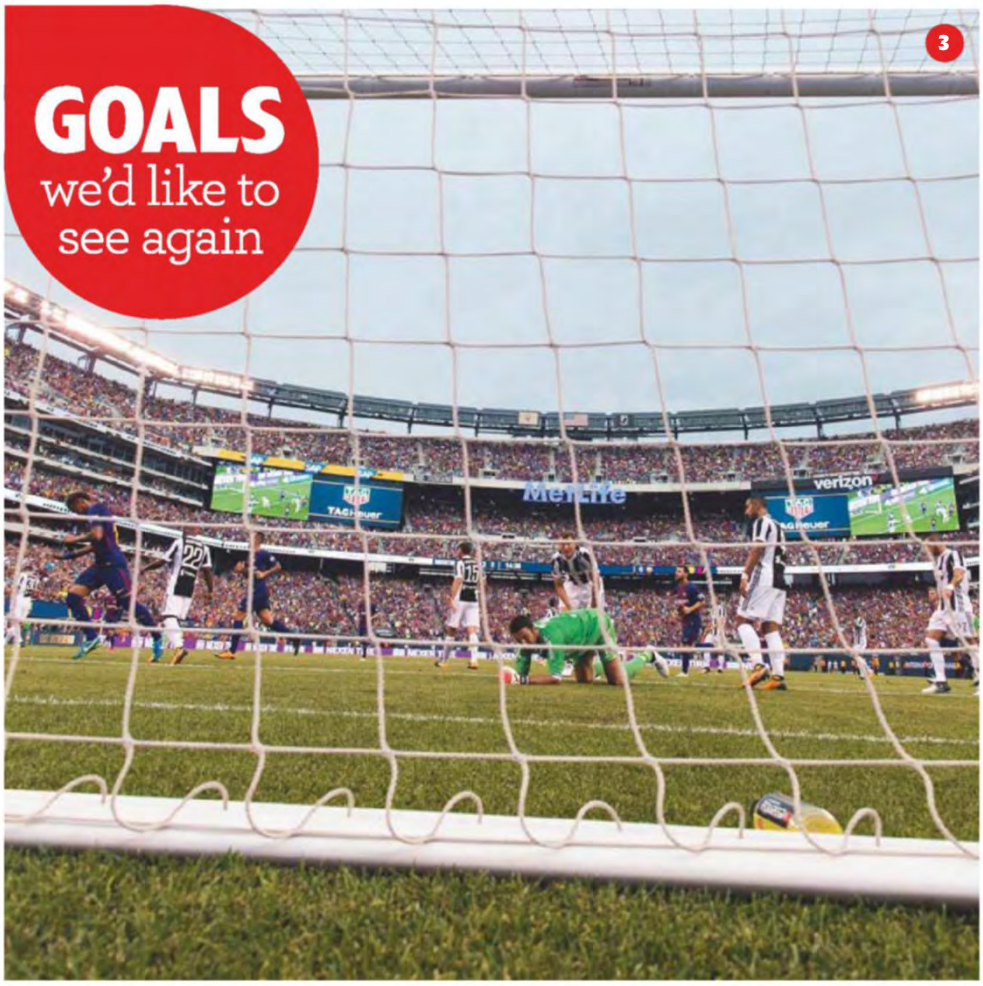
Mexico's coach missed the whole of the Gold Cup after being banned for six matches on the day the tournament started for using insulting words and displaying an aggressive attitude to match officials during the third-place play-off against Portugal in the Confederations Cup.

Banned...Juan Carlos Osorio

"If I wasn't called Cristiano Ronaldo, I wouldn't be seated here"

Summoned to a Spanish court on tax charges, the Real Madrid star denies any wrongdoing

GOALS we'd like to see again



1 WAYNE ROONEY
Everton v Gor Mahia
Sees the keeper off his line and hits a 30-yard dipping shot into the top of the net on his first game back in an Everton shirt.

2 DJIBRIL SIDIBE
Monaco v PSG
Latches onto a superb through ball from Youri Tielemans and dinks a neat finish over the advancing goalkeeper.

3 NEYMAR
Barcelona v Juventus
Dribbles across the six-yard area, beating four defenders, before striking a shot past Gigi Buffon.

4 MANTAS KUKLYS
Zalgiris v Ludogorets
Meets a cut back from the right and rifles a shot inside the near post.

5 DIEGO BEJARANO
The Strongest v Lanus
A backheel from the edge of the six-yard area that goes in off the far post.

6 JOZY ALTIDORE
USA v Jamaica
A free-kick in the Gold Cup Final that curls away from the keeper and into the top corner.

WINNERS

BRUCE ARENA
Became the first coach to win three Gold Cups as USA beat Jamaica in the Final.

AL AHLY
Became the first team to win the Egyptian Premier League without losing a game since it expanded to 14 sides.

SHANE KLUIVERT
On the books of Paris Saint-Germain, the son of former Holland star Patrick Kluivert has signed a sponsorship deal with Nike – aged nine.

LOSERS

HURACAN
Their 5-1 defeat against Libertad was the heaviest by an Argentinian club at home in the history of the Libertadores Cup.

GALATASARAY
UEFA Cup winners in 2000, the Turkish side went out of the Europa League to Swedish side Ostersund in the qualifiers.

ZANZIBAR
Four months after being accepted as a member of the Confederation of African Football, the African island's membership was rescinded.

"Believe me, Neymar didn't come for money. He really came for the project, the ambition; he likes new challenges"

PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi on smashing the world transfer record

HEADLINER: Neymar Snr

Svengali father behind world-record transfer

On joining Paris Saint-Germain for the world-record fee of €222m, Neymar dismissed the importance of the finances and talked up "the project". They have powerful ambition in common. For PSG this means winning the Champions League; for Neymar it means becoming the world's number-one player.

Having extended his contract with Barcelona to 2022 less than a year ago, the Brazilian's insistence on quitting Spain suggests that fleeing La Liga and the ongoing tax and legal problems was not an insignificant reason. It was a dark-shadow nuisance for him...and also, of course, for his father.

Along with agent Wagner Ribeiro, Neymar Snr has long since learned how to drive the hardest bargain in town. Much of the brouhaha over Neymar's sale from Santos to Barcelona – which brought about the initial downfall of president Sandro Rosell – concerned a murky web of secret contracts, image rights and offshore payments.

Neymar Snr had seen other talented youngsters promise much and fade fast. Easy money, praise and popularity had wrecked their dreams and prospects. That was not going to happen to his son.

By 17, Neymar was not only playing for Santos' senior team but being watched by a host of European scouts. In 2012 Barcelona beat Real Madrid to a transfer option. But it came at a price – and Neymar Snr now had Barca on the hook.

The extent became clear in January 2014 when Sandro Rosell quit as Barca president. Neymar had been brought from Brazil in 2013 and the Brazilian's reluctance to move a year before a World Cup on home soil offered father and son a further bargaining bonus.

But when the taxman came knocking it was revealed that his transfer from Santos, as agreed with Neymar Snr more than with the club, had included staged payments – considered wages rather than transfer fees.

Hence the Neymar deal ended up costing around €95m, and not the slimmed-down €57m which Rosell had claimed originally – and which few observers had believed. To what extent the "game" was orchestrated by Rosell or by Neymar Snr is unclear. But the father's significance in his son's business affairs did soon become clear.

The transfer had included a €10m pre-deal deposit plus €40m to N&N (Neymar and Nadine – the father and mother's management company). Barcelona was liable for total payments to Santos, to the player, to his family and to associates – including wages, bonuses and commissions – of more than €130m.

When interest was reported last year from England and France, Barca needed little persuading to keep Neymar happy with a new six-year contract plus, along the way, a guaranteed bonus of €30m for Neymar Snr to "persuade" his son to stay.

PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi felt his club had been used by Neymar Snr to force a new contract at Barcelona, but he also believed the ongoing tax storms would drive Neymar out of Spain sooner rather than later.

> PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi felt his club had been used by Neymar Snr to force a new contract

Ever since the tax issue had arisen, tension had been in the air and complications existed. Neymar had to buy out his contract with Barcelona for that massive €222m and Spanish league president Javier Tebas raised all sorts of unjustified threats concerning UEFA's financial fair play regulations.

Then there was the issue of when the deal could be done. Ideally PSG wanted everything signed and sealed by the end of July so Neymar could make his debut in the first Ligue 1 game of the season.

Neymar wanted that, but Neymar Snr did not and even the player expressed concern that his father might let the transfer slip away. The last hitch was not about the player's £55m annual salary but the €30m commission due to Neymar Snr for persuading his son to "stay" at Camp Nou.

The commission was due as long as Neymar was still at Barcelona at the end of July 2017. Hence it was only on August 4, after the delayed medical and signature, that Neymar flew in for the Parisian presentational circus.

Keir Radnedge

Family...father and son

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Death of a whistle-blower away

Chuck Blazer told everyone who asked that his idol was Joao Havelange. Both worked hard for football, and that deserves to be acknowledged, yet both bent it into a game of self-enrichment. The goal became power and personal wealth, and while power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

And not only in sport, but in politics, business and religion as well. Sepp Blatter, a man who should know (and who should know better), was fond of quipping that football could not expect to be immune to "the little devils of society". True, but knowing he was supping with these little devils around the FIFA boardroom table, Blatter's ultimate failure was in acquiescing, not acting.

Havelange worked his way up from Brazilian Olympic swimmer to national sports supremo to World Cup-winning director to FIFA president. That opened his bank vaults to the commissions/bribes of ISL Marketing.

No wonder Blazer, who has died at 72 after a long battle with cancer, admired Havelange. Where Havelange led, Blazer followed – all the way to the enforced and self-incriminating admissions which lifted the lid on the scandal-wracked excesses within FIFA's leadership and FIFAGate.

Blazer was a successful business adventurist before becoming caught up in football. He was one of the original influential figures in the rise of professional football in the United States. There was no money to be made back then, only money to be lost. But the work of Werner Fricker, Blazer, Sunil Gulati, Clive Toye, Alan Rothenberg and others converted what was an underground movement into the vibrant US soccer scene of today.

Significant stepping stones included the bankruptcy-bound bubble of the NASL – which taught its survivors a host of valuable lessons – the hosting of the World Cup in 1994 and the launch of MLS.

As for Blazer, he developed the USSF's national team programme in the 1980s, served one term as its executive vice-president and was then commissioner of the American Soccer League. He then gained access to the levers of international football power through CONCACAF, where he became general-secretary in 1990 – just as Trinidadian history lecturer Jack Warner was taking up the presidency. They seized the sponsor-rich potential of the forthcoming US World Cup to turn a hitherto sleepy confederation into a political force within world football.

> CONCACAF funded his two private apartments. One he shared with his parrot, Max Blazer; the other, famously, was a home for his girlfriend's cats

One of their first grandiose steps was to move CONCACAF's headquarters from Guatemala City to Trump Tower on New York's Fifth Avenue. But that was also their first big mistake because it brought CONCACAF's business within the ultimately fatal ambit of the US law and revenue services.

Blazer's particular pride was in the high-tech television control centre he constructed within a Trump Tower suite. CONCACAF also funded his two private apartments. One he shared with his parrot, Max Blazer; the other, famously, was a home for his girlfriend's cats.

Power...Chuck Blazer at the awarding of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup hosting rights

Grandiose...Trump Tower was home to CONCACAF

Warner helped ensure that Blazer was soon a fixture within various FIFA committees. They also engineered a change of CONCACAF regulations permitting a paid staff member to stand for election to the FIFA ExCo – as Blazer did in 1997 after the death of the long-serving Mexican, Guillermo Canedo.

No one has estimated how many millions Warner generated personally from patronage, influence and the World Cup bid bribes as set out in the FIFAGate and associated documentation. Blazer, it is known, pocketed more than $20m from CONCACAF, including $17m in commissions.

He also enjoyed the values of those Trump Tower apartments and used at least $4m of CONCACAF money to buy property in the Bahamas. But this was probably just

the tip of the dollar iceberg.

Blazer both enriched and enjoyed himself at football's expense. He kept a vintage Mercedes-Benz parked in the FIFA garage in Zurich and regaled his social media followers with endless tales of his five-star travels.

Indeed, such high living saw Blazer grow so corpulent that he had to use a mobility scooter to get round. It was while "scooting" to a favourite New York restaurant that his career was brought to a literal halt by FBI and IRS agents.

The rest has been well detailed: the fall-out with Warner over the cash-for-votes scandal entangled with Mohamed Bin Hammam's doomed FIFA presidential bid; the use of a hotel keyfob at the London Olympics to record incriminating conversations; the lifting of the lid on the web of corruption.

Blazer's death meant that, with a sentencing date still to be set by a Brooklyn court, he escaped justice.

So too, for what it may be worth, did Havelange. WS

Idol...Joao Havelange

Infantino's FIFA is running out of credibility – and cash

Jet set...Infantino travels in style

There are a significant number of people who want to see Gianni Infantino fail as FIFA president, and they include the likes of Australian sportswear entrepreneur Jamie Fuller and British MP Damian Green, who believe that the world football federation was brought to its knees by the Havelange/Blatter regimes and is in the death throes.

For them it is beyond redemption. No matter who sits on the throne.

Others, such as embittered former employees and the media commentators who have their ear, believe that the former UEFA general-secretary has risen above his station and demonstrated an inability to cope with his role.

Further critics fear that Infantino's own ego has obstructed his ability to pilot FIFA into the safe port Sepp Blatter could see over the horizon before he was drowned in stormy seas largely of his own making.

Infantino has been accused of various sins, such as the use of private jets, his expense account, the fatuous and diversionary "legends" circus, and meddling beyond the call of duty in the ousting of Issa Hayatou as president of the African confederation.

Far more serious, however, is the financial situation. This is crucial.

Infantino won the election 18 months ago by promising a massive increase in development support and an increase in World Cup numbers. He has kept his word on this, but whether he can keep his word on development funds is intriguing. Emirates and Sony quit as sponsors – or "partners" as corporate speak would have it – with Qatar Airways and Wanda stepping up, along with several other ambitious commercial unknowns.

The significance of these commercial changes did not escape the view of Patrick Nally, FIFA's original super-salesman back in the 1970s. As he noted: "Once the world's biggest companies fell over themselves to sponsor the World Cup. Not any more."

That is the commercial reality of FIFA's political failure under Blatter and now Infantino. Credibility has vanished, the senior salesmen have been replaced and FIFA has been left staring at two successive years of heavy losses.

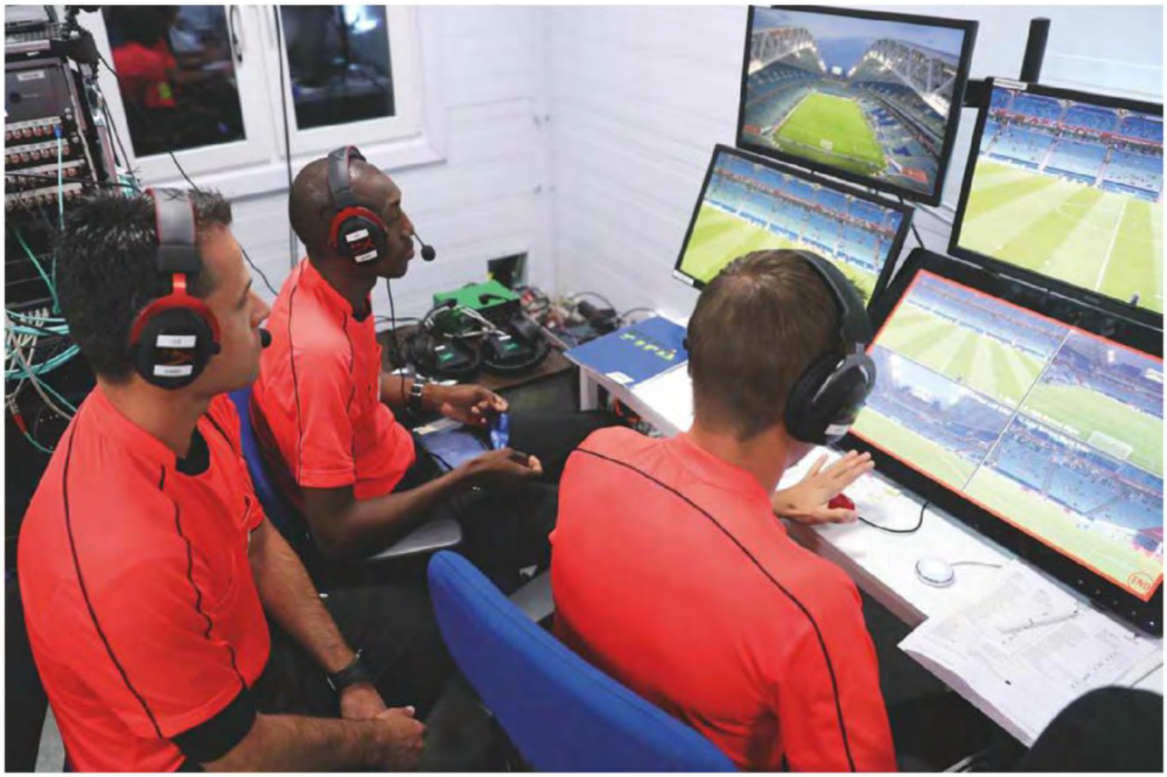
Infantino has promised revenues generated by the excitement of World Cup year will put this all to financial right. Yet this is not guaranteed and at the 2019 Congress, Infantino's success or failure will be evident in the figures.

To paraphrase CP Scott: opinion is free; accounts are sacred. WS

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

VAR flattered to deceive in Russia



Warm-up...the VAR team before Mexico's game with New Zealand

According to FIFA president Gianni Infantino, the video assistant referee (VAR) trial at the Confederations Cup was "a great success". Hardly.

For a start, there were simply too many hitches and glitches to permit such optimism. For example, when does – or, even better, should – the referee call for VAR help? Similarly, when should the VAR team intervene on its own initiative? Both of these situations were left unclear.

And surely no one will have been satisfied with the delays that accompanied some of the decisions. Then there was the fact that game-changing decisions were made but the players, coaches and fans in the stadium were left in the dark as to what evidence the VAR team had used to overturn the referee's decision.

Admittedly, these are all problems that should fade away as those involved – the match referee plus the three-man VAR team – gain experience. However, this will take longer than anyone is prepared to admit because the use of VAR is not widespread and there may even be occasions when it is not used at all in a game.

There were incidents during the tournament in Russia that cried out for VAR intervention but didn't get it.

For example, when the hosts' goalkeeper, Igor Akinfeev, was beaten to the ball outside his area by Hirving Lozano, he kicked the Mexican in the chest as the ball went into the net. With Mexico celebrating the goal, the ref can be forgiven for not penalising Akinfeev, but the VAR people must have seen what was a pretty bad foul and had plenty of time to alert the ref – so why did they not do so?

A much bigger problem lurks further down the line with football's insistence, in both its rules and in its referee interpretations, on favouring defensive play and being far too ready to give any benefit of doubt to defenders. This attitude can be seen at its most ridiculous in the matter of scoring a goal.

> A much bigger problem lurks further down the line with football's insistence on favouring defensive play and being too ready to give any benefit of doubt to defenders

As we all know, the whole of the ball has to be over the goal line, and goal-line technology (GLT) can now tell us, down to a fraction of a millimetre, whether that is the case. So we get splendid images showing the ball over the line, which any sane person would say is a goal, but the wonders of technology tell us no,

only 99.99 per cent of the ball was over the line. So, no goal.

GLT does not involve humans but is an example of the how the use of apparently infallible technology can become farcical. And that same bias comes through in some VAR decisions, which involve humans.

We saw it clearly during the Chile v Cameroon game. Just before half-time, Chile scored – but then the VAR guys reviewed the goal and finally declared it offside. From the replays it could be seen that a kneecap, or maybe it was a toe, was offside. A millimetric decision was made that was every bit as silly as the ball-not-over-the-line judgments.

Most worrying of all are the decisions made entirely by VAR in which they either back up or over-rule the referee on judgment calls. In the game against Australia, Chile's Alexis Sanchez was clumsily barged over by Mark Milligan, who failed to make any contact with the ball. No decision from the referee, and again the VAR judges agreed.

The logic here is that the referee exerts his pro-defence bias in not making the decision and the three VAR referees, who inevitably share the same bias, confirm his decision.

The danger is that bad decisions are converted into good decisions – after all, they have been certified as such by technology and/or VAR.

At the moment, technology and VAR, which are meant to ensure that the correct calls are made, or that bad calls can be quickly corrected, are just as likely to work in the opposite direction, by giving an air of technological or scientific certainty to poor decisions. WS

Unpunished...Russia keeper Igor Akinfeev

REPORTS WE COULDN'T MAKE UP

1 PRE-SEASON PADDLE

White-water rafting seemed to be the popular choice of pre-season preparation among Dutch clubs this summer.

Ajax players took their paddles to the Ziller river during their training camp at Hippach in Austria, while PSV took the white-water route from Chable to Sembrancher in the Swiss Alps during preparations for the new Eredivisie season.

Raft...Ajax

2 BACK OF THE NET

When World Cup-winner Cristian Zaccardo found himself without a club this summer he advertised his services on job-hunting site LinkedIn.

The 35-year-old full-back, who played three times during the *Azzurri*'s 2006 triumph, was a free agent after being released by Vicenza following their relegation from Serie B.

A Bundesliga winner with Wolfsburg in 2009, who has also played for Milan in Serie A, he wrote on the website: "I'm still good physically. I could play two more years at high levels. Who will take me to make a deal?"

Record...Besiktas wanted striker

On offer... Cristian Zaccardo

Sting...St Pauli

3 COSTA IN DEMAND

Besiktas fans set a new record on Instagram with their comments on the photo-sharing social media site after rumours spread that Diego Costa might join the Turkish club.

Over 3.1 million comments were posted, many simply urging the Chelsea and Brazil striker: "Come to Besiktas" – beating the previous record of 1.168m comments about a photo of singer Selena Gomez.

4 BUYING SUCCESS

Despite finishing fifth in the First Division last season and missing out on promotion to the Premier League, AmaZulu will start the new campaign in the South African top flight – after buying second-tier champions Thanda Royal Zulu.

Thanda will now be moved 100 miles to their new owners' Durban base and change their name to AmaZulu.

"We are not against the sale of franchises," says South African Football Association president Danny Jordaan. "Sometimes owners cannot afford the costs associated with running a PSL club. What we do object to is the relocation of clubs in the process."

5 ST PAULI ARE THE BEES' KNEES

Bundesliga 2 club St Pauli are well-known for their loyal fans, who wave skull-and-crossbones flags during games and protest against racism and fascism. The side even run out to AC/DC's *Hells Bells* before matches.

But now they have had beehives installed in their Millerntor stadium in Hamburg and are producing their own honey – which they have called *Ewaldbienenhonig*, which translates as "Ewald honey" in honour of the club coach Ewald Lienen.

"Those who know me realise it's difficult to make me lose my cool, but this referee managed to do it"

Barcelona midfielder Ivan Rakitic accuses Jair Marrufo of insulting him during an exhibition game against Real Madrid in Miami

OBITUARIES

LES MURRAY (1945-2017)

Australian broadcaster, commentator and contributor to *World Soccer*, he played a pivotal role in the development of the game in Australia and was affectionately known as Australia's "Mr Football". Originally named Laszlo Urge, he was born in Hungary and emigrated to Australia in the 1950s. For many years he was the host of SBS show *The World Game*, a phrase he coined.

WALDIR PERES (1951-2017)

Brazil's goalkeeper at the 1982 World Cup died aged 66 following a heart attack. He was also a non-playing member of Brazil's squad at the 1974 and 1978 World Cups. He played for Sao Paulo from 1973 to 1984, winning the Brazilian championship in 1977.

ABDELMAJID DOLMY (1953-2017)

A member of the Morocco squad that made history at the 1986 World Cup by becoming the first African side to get beyond the group stage, he played over 550 games for Raja Club Athletic of Casablanca and also participated at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

BIGGEST SUMMER TRANSERS SO FAR

China move...Anthony Modeste (left)

Bayern buy...Corentin Tolisso

City switch...Kyle Walker

Juve joy...Federico Bernardeschi

€85m	**Romelu Lukaku** (Everton, Eng, to Manchester United, Eng)
€65m	**Alvaro Morata** (Real Madrid, Spa, to Chelsea, Eng)
€57.5m	**Benjamin Mendy** (Monaco, Fra, to Manchester City, Eng)
€53m	**Alexandre Lacazette** (Lyon, Fra, to Arsenal, Eng)
€51m	**Kyle Walker** (Tottenham Hotspur, Eng, to Manchester City, Eng)
€50m	**Bernardo Silva** (Monaco, Fra, to Manchester City, Eng)
€44.7m	**Nemanja Matic** (Chelsea, Eng, to Manchester United, Eng)
€42m	**Leonardo Bonucci** (Juventus, Ita, to Milan, Ita)
€41.5m	**Corentin Tolisso** (Lyon, Fra, to Bayern Munich, Ger)
€40m	**Tiemoue Bakayoko** (Monaco, Fra, to Chelsea, Eng)
€40m	**Federico Bernardeschi** (Fiorentina, Ita, to Juventus, Ita)
€40m	**Ederson** (Benfica, Por, to Manchester City, Eng)
€39m	**Mohamed Salah** (Roma, Ita, to Liverpool, Eng)
€38m	**Andre Silva** (Porto, Por, to Milan, Ita)
€36m	**Vitolo** (Sevilla, Spa, to Atletico Madrid, Spa)
€35m	**Victor Lindelof** (Benfica, Por, to Manchester United, Eng)
€35m	**Anthony Modeste** (Cologne, Ger, to Tianjin Quanjian, Chn)
€35m	**Antonio Rudiger** (Roma, Ita, to Chelsea, Eng)
€30m	**Danilo** (Real Madrid, Spa, to Manchester City, Eng)
€30m	**Theo Hernandez** (Atletico Madrid, Spa, to Real Madrid, Spa)
€30m	**Nelson Semedo** (Benfica, Por, to Barcelona, Spa)
€29m	**Jordan Pickford** (Sunderland, Eng, to Everton, Eng)
€28.5m	**Michael Keane** (Burnley, Eng, to Everton, Eng)
€27m	**Davy Klaassen** (Ajax, Hol, to Everton, Eng)
€24m	**Hakan Calhanoglu** (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger, to Milan, Ita)
€24m	**Andrea Conti** (Atalanta, Ita, to Milan, Ita)
€23m	**Leandro Paredes** (Roma, Ita, to Zenit, Rus)
€23m	**Milan Skriniar** (Sampdoria, Ita, to Internazionale, Ita)
€23m	**Youri Tielemans** (Anderlecht, Blg, to Monaco, Fra)
€22.8m	**Nathan Ake** (Chelsea, Eng, to Bournemouth, Eng)
€22.3m	**Marko Arnautovic** (Stoke City, Eng, to West Ham United, Eng)
€21m	**Kingsley Coman** (Juventus, Ita, to Bayern Munich, Ger)
€20m	**John Anthony Brooks** (Hertha Berlin, Ger, to Wolfsburg, Ger)
€20m	**Juan Cuadrado** (Chelsea, Eng, to Juventus, Ita)
€20m	**Harry Maguire** (Hull City, Eng, to Leicester City, Eng)
€20m	**Nikola Maksimovic** (Torino, Ita, to Napoli, Ita)
€20m	**Luis Muriel** (Sampdoria, Ita, to Sevilla, Spa)
€20m	**Maximilian Philipp** (Freiburg, Ger, to Borussia Dortmund, Ger)
€20m	**Niklas Sule** (Hoffenheim, Ger, to Bayern Munich, Ger)
€20m	**Oliver Torres** (Atletico Madrid, Spa, to Porto, Por)

"This goal was for Appie and his family"

Ajax midfielder Donny Van de Beek dedicates his Champions League goal against Nice to team-mate Abdelhak Nouri, who collapsed during a pre-season friendly and was later diagnosed with severe brain damage

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Appointments, sackings and loans

IN

Albanian job... Christian Panucci

EUROPE

Romanian **MIRCEA LUCESCU** was appointed coach of Turkey, replacing Fatih Terim.

Former Roma and Italy defender **CHRISTIAN PANUCCI**, who was Fabio Capello's assistant with the Russian national side, succeeded Gianni De Biasi as coach of Albania.

CONCACAF

BOB BRADLEY will take charge of Los Angeles FC when they join MLS next season. Sigi Schmid returned to LA Galaxy after they parted company with Curt Onalfo.

Sporting Kansas City striker **DOM DWYER** joined Orlando City for an MLS record $1.6m.

AFRICA

FRANCISCO FILHO, who is a former youth coach at Manchester United and was an interpreter for Cristiano Ronaldo when he arrived at Old Trafford, was appointed national coach of Mauritius.

DAVID BRIGHT was appointed coach of Botswana for a fourth time after **PETER BUTLER** left to join South Africa's Platinum Stars.

Record... Dom Dwyer

ASIA

Argentinian coach **GABRIEL CALDERON**, who led Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad to the 2009 AFC Champions League Final, took charge of promoted Qatar Stars League side Qatar SC.

Former England striker **TEDDY SHERINGHAM** was named coach of Indian Super League side Atletico de Kolkata. Kerala Blasters appointed **RENE MEULENSTEEN** to replace **STEVE COPPELL**, who joined Jamshedpur.

New job...Teddy Sheringham

Gone...former Turkey coach Fatih Terim

EUROPE

Russia's all-time top scorer with 30 goals, Zenit striker **ALEKSANDR KERZHAKOV** retired aged 34.

PAUL ROBINSON, who won 41 caps in goal for England, retired at 37.

Hearts sacked manager **IAN CATHRO** four days before the start of the Scottish Premiership side.

Non starter...Ian Cathro

AFRICA

Serbian **MILUTIN SREDOJEVIC** terminated his contract as coach of Uganda after four years in charge.

Zamalek sacked Portuguese coach **AUGUSTO INACIO** after less than four months in charge after the Egyptian club missed out on the semi-finals of the African Champions League.

OUT

Dismissed... Augusto Inacio

Red Devil... Romelu Lukaku

United get their man

Manchester United paid Everton an initial £75m for Belgian striker **ROMELU LUKAKU**. For all the summer moves in Europe's top five leagues go to www.worldsoccer.com

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Young Blues...(from left) Jamal Blackman, Isaiah Brown, Dominic Solanke, Jeremie Boga, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Mitchell Beeney, Andreas Christensen and Nathan Ake in 2015

Chelsea's young talents are wasted at the Bridge

Chelsea had a hectic and gruelling summer tour, which makes you wonder whether they have put their players under damaging physical pressure, ahead of a season in which, as competitors in the European Champions Cup, they can no longer have those midweek rests which were something of a blessing in disguise last season.

With their splendid scouting and coaching programme, Chelsea turn out fine players in abundance; then, by and large, never give them a chance. At the end of last season they had some 38 players out on loan.

Now, having paid Roma a huge fee for German international centre-back Antonio Rudiger, they have sold Nathan Ake to Bournemouth, where he did well on loan last season. Will Rudiger really be such an improvement on the 22-year-old Ake, who admits he would have been worried had he stayed at Chelsea about being able "to come in and play".

Chelsea were much put out when their highly promising striker Dominic Solanke, a great success in the England team which won the under-20 World Cup in South Korea, promptly decided at the end of his contract to walk out and join Liverpool. But given the endemic frustration of being a young talent at Stamford Bridge, who could blame him?

At least the highly promising Andreas Christensen is coming back to the Bridge after two successful seasons in the Bundesliga, though that is something of a rarity as many more go out on loan.

Huge fee...defender Antonio Rudiger

Isaiah Brown, who has joined newly promoted Brighton, impressed me in the Huddersfield Town attack last season. Tammy Abraham, after scoring all those goals for Bristol City, finds a berth at Swansea, having turned down promoted Newcastle, and the tall, powerful midfield attacker Ruben Loftus-Cheek, after frequent but sporadic appearances for Chelsea, should get a good many more games for Crystal Palace.

As long ago as 1952, after an astonishing match at Stamford Bridge, in which his young Manchester United side won 6-5, Matt Busby said to me: "If you don't put them in, you don't know what you've got."

Chelsea don't put them in, they put them out: 38 and counting.

Blazer, a fat cat who evaded justice

Chuck Blazer, so grossly overweight that he could not even get into his own car, has departed this world, having turned State's evidence under the relentless probing of the admirable Loretta Lynch, as US attorney general, and the FBI.

Blazer could, and arguably should, have spent the rest of his devious life in prison; instead he was able to stay at liberty while blowing the whistle on his co-conspirators. Note that it was the American authorities who brought him to book. FIFA did nothing to frustrate him. In that old Sicilian saying, one hand washed the other.

Blazer was a member of the FIFA executive committee for 15 years and general-secretary of CONCACAF, whose offices he moved conveniently to New York, where they occupied the whole of the 17th floor of Trump Tower. He himself, all 30 stone of him, had two apartments on the 19th floor, at $18,000 a month, with beside it a $6,000-a-month apartment for his cats.

Whistle-blower... Chuck Blazer

Did he, as has been claimed, help to make soccer popular in America, at a professional level? Perhaps he did, although the soccer moms had already popularised it at schoolboy level. The fact remains that he himself profited grossly from the sport.

He managed to hold out until 2011, when, while still working for FIFA, he gave the authorities access to all his murky records. He then stayed out of the loop for another two years before deciding he had better run for cover, and pleaded guilty to bribery, money laundering and tax evasion, happily putting his fat finger on to many FIFA officials who had long been guilty of such offences.

So he stayed out of jail, which could have amounted to a 75-year prison sentence. Not a bad bargain.

Technology prompts Maradona confession

Handy...Maradona prevents a Russian goal at the 1990 World Cup

Another to perform a U-turn, though in this case with no traces of criminal as opposed to anti-sporting conduct, is Diego Maradona.

Scorer of a notorious goal against England in the Azteca Stadium in a World Cup tie in 1986, Maradona, playing for Argentina with renown, beat goalkeeper Peter Shilton to a high ball with his elevated fist. An inexperienced African referee allowed that goal to stand and Maradona followed it with another, this time a superb sustained dribble past defender after defender.

Shamelessly, he attributed his first goal to the "Hand of God".

After the match, a wise Italian journalist said to me he thought that England's defence was in a state of shock after the first outrageous goal, "like a man who has just had his wallet stolen".

Maradona, now 56, has just said, finally confessing: "That goal wouldn't have stood if technology had been around. I'll tell you something else, at the 1990 World Cup I used my hand to clear the ball off the line. We were lucky, because the referee didn't see it. It's not just my goal that wouldn't have counted.

"Let's not forget that England won the World Cup in 1966 with a shot that didn't go over the line. Then, in 2010, Frank Lampard's shot crossed the line against Germany but it wasn't given."

> "That goal wouldn't have stood if technology had been around"

I have long wondered what might have happened had it been awarded. Would Germany have subsequently dominated as they did?

What happened to the Glazer protests?

When the Glazers took over Manchester United there was a sustained furore. United fans detested them and demonstrated angrily against them, but the Glazers remained unmoved.

Today, you hear nothing about them, and far from being crippled by debt, United are spending immense sums of money on new acquisitions, such as Paul Pogba, who was once allowed to leave the club for Juventus.

> Far from being crippled by debt, United are spending immense sums of money

It would be interesting indeed to know how United have emerged with such financial clout after the Glazers' embattled takeover – though £50million a year from Chevrolet does help.

Gone...anti-Glazer protests at Old Trafford

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

eye witness

James Montague reports

KOSOVO

Ticket to the big time

Historic encounter in Champions League

The two men in green shirts were called into action at the last minute, but they were doing a brisk trade. Sitting at a plastic table in the main square of Mitrovica in Kosovo they have in front of them four piles of tickets for an historic match in the city. They have just two days to shift them.

"We have tickets for €2, €4 or €7," says the shorter of the two men, as a steady stream of fans pass by, buying tickets for friends and family. His leather purse is stuffed with Euros, perhaps explaining why a security guard is standing next to them, eyeing each customer as they approach.

Over the past few years the word "historic" has prefaced almost every football match connected to Kosovo. There was the historic first international against FIFA opponents – a goalless draw against Haiti – in this same city, in 2014. In 2016 there was the historic decision to admit Kosovo into UEFA and FIFA, despite huge political opposition from Serbia, who still sees Kosovo as part of both its history and territory. A few months later the Kosovo national team played its historic first competitive match, a 2018 World Cup qualification match against Finland.

And now tickets are being sold for Kosovo's historic first-ever men's Champions League match on home soil, where the reigning champions Trepca '89 take on Vikingur of the Faroe Islands. And the only way to buy tickets for the game is here, off a patio table in the city centre, in cash. Over the course of one Sunday afternoon, nearly half of the 16,000 available tickets for the game at the Olympic Stadium Adem Jashari will be sold. Everyone is confident of victory.

"We will win 1-0," says the taller man behind the patio table, who is wearing the club's green-and-white home shirt. "And yes, Trepca will go to the next round."

Just a few weeks after the Champions League Final in Cardiff saw Ronaldo score twice and Real Madrid clinch back-to-back titles for the first time in the modern era, the competition has returned. The first qualifying round is truly a minnows affair, with the champions of Kosovo joining those of Northern Ireland, Wales, Gibraltar, Estonia, Armenia, the Faroe Islands, Malta, San Marino and Andorra.

As a new member with a coefficient of zero, Kosovo is ranked last. Its teams could have entered UEFA competition last season but the stadiums didn't meet the strict licensing requirements. However, after significant investment in a ground that was built originally in the late 1970s during the Yugoslav days, and which once hosted a European Championship qualifier against Romania, Kosovo finally has a stadium fit for purpose.

Trepca '89 were the runaway winners of the Superliga – while FC Pristina, who dazzled the Yugoslav First Division in the mid-1980s, qualified for the Europa League – and their story is steeped in Kosovo's past conflicts.

The club's name comes from the Trepca mines underneath the city and their mineral wealth worth billions. The silver that adorned the robes of Byzantine emperors was cleaved from the ground here eight centuries ago, with the Germans requisitioning the mines during World War Two and digging up 30 per cent of the Nazi's entire lead. By the 1970s the mines employed 15,000 people and gave the city of Mitrovica incredible wealth.

However, when Yugoslavia began to fall

Keen...a handful of fans watch training

In demand...selling tickets for the game against Vikingur

apart and the wars came, the mines played a crucial role, with some arguing that the conflict was really about who controlled Kosovo's mineral wealth. Albanian miners became a radical opponent to Belgrade's rule, leading to an underground hunger strike that turned the miners into heroes. After the war the city was eventually split: Kosovar Albanians living south of the Ibar river, with Kosovar Serbs to the north. A detachment of Italian Carabinieri still patrols the main bridge that crosses the river.

Today the mines are split north and south, and work at a fraction of their capacity. The city also has three football teams bearing the Trepca name.

So, today, there's a KF Trepca, who were relegated from the Kosovo Superliga last

Dilapidated...the Riza Lushta stadium is in poor condition

Off...Blerand Kurtishaj is about to see red

season, an FK Trepca that plays in the fourth tier of Serbian football, and Trepca '89, whose roots go back to a team called Rudari, who were formed in 1945 but changed their name in honour of the miner's strike. All three sport an almost identical green-and-black badge that has the iconic Trepca mine symbol at its heart.

"The history of Kosovo's football is among the most painful in the world. I would say it's unparalleled," says Xhavit Kajtazi, an author and Kosovan football historian. Given the talent playing for other national teams, Kajtazi believes that "Kosovo would be unbeatable in Europe and in the world today, but we are unlucky and have not had the chance to see them

March...miners before kick-off

playing for the country of their origin".

The Riza Lushta stadium, named after Kosovo's first superstar footballer, who played close to 200 Serie A games and scored over 80 goals in stints at Juventus and Napoli from 1939 to 1945, sits next to the Ibar river that divides the city. It is home to Trepca '89 but is in poor shape. A concrete, one-step terrace is crumbling at the edges and overgrown with moss and weeds. The wall behind it is topped with rusting barbed wire. There are no floodlights. But a small crowd has turned up to watch Trepca '89 train in the fading light, the day before arguably the biggest game in the club's history.

The chairman of Trepca '89 is Abedin Zeka and he is also in the crowd, watching the team he has funded for 20 years. "In 25 years we were out of football and had no money but now we will play in Europe," he says, managing to sound both surprised and proud. Zeka runs a taxi company in the city and has been in charge during those years when Champions League football looked very far away. "We waited 25 years for this," he says. "We sacrificed for it. And now we are living our dreams."

With recognition and European competition, the modern game is beginning to take root in Kosovo, bringing big changes. Even at the Champions League qualification stage the money Zeka receives from UEFA is transformational. Just for reaching this stage the club receives €260,000 from UEFA as representative champions, and then a further €220,000 for playing in the first round. Zeka explains that the UEFA's money is easily five times the entire budget of their nearest rivals.

The money and the exposure also attracts agents, who are both looking for a diamond in the rough – Kosovo international Milot Rashica was discovered by Dutch club Vitesse, a winger playing for nearby FC Vushtrria – and as a shop window for their players looking to move to bigger, more lucrative leagues.

"I didn't know anything about Kosovo, I couldn't imagine what it looked like," says Kabba Sambou, a 20-year-old centre-back from Gambia. Sambou, who was called up to the Gambia national team last year, was spotted playing by an agent in the Senegalese league who then contacted the club. He explains of his move: "I wanted a bigger league but my agent said: 'this is your first time in Europe. This is good. You come and have experience in European football and if you perform you might have the chance to move to a bigger league'. Everyone wants to play in the Champions League."

The most successful import, however, has been Nigerian striker John Otto, who scored 27 goals for Trepca '89 after moving on loan from Albania's KF Skenderbeu. He was discovered playing second division football in Lagos by the club's well developed network of scouts. "I never thought I'd be in Kosovo," says Otto. "I thought I'd go to a top club."

The cold has been a shock, Otto says, and he has been surprised by some of the difficulties in getting to and from a nation still not recognised officially as a country by the UN. When Trepca '89 travelled to the Faroe Islands for the first leg, which they lost 2-1, the team had to take a flight to Denmark and two overnight trains before making it back to Pristina. "This is

Historic...a fan with his ticket

Chairman... Abedin Zeka

Support...just over 15,000 fans were at the game

where I am," says Otto after training had finished. "Tomorrow I can be anywhere in the world. I need to prepare myself."

Vikingur were also in their first Champions League campaign, having won their first championship. Their team is made up of part-time players and captain Atli Gregersen, who is also the captain of the national team, works in the Faroe Islands unemployment office. However, with the economy doing well, there aren't many vacancies at the moment.

"Yes, there isn't much to do!" he laughs. "The mackerel industry is doing really well. If I could get onto one of those trawlers I'd be gone. You can get €200,000 a year! We're in the wrong business."

The players had no idea what Kosovo would be like when they got here. "I watch the BBC and CNN at home so I thought it was a nightmare draw.

"Obviously the team was from the former Yugoslavia so they could pass the ball. Was it still a war zone?" says Gregersen, who soon realised he was safe when he arrived and saw Pristina's cafe-lined boulevards full of people near his hotel.

For Vikingur the UEFA money was also a huge bonus. While the owner of Trepca '89 was going to use the cash to pay his players more and attract best players, Gregersen had more modest goals. "It is two years budget for us," he says. "So who knows, maybe we'll get a new shower in the dressing room. We're living the dream without the money!"

For one Vikingur player, the match had added significance. Attacking midfielder Filip Dordevic, who is now 23, was born in Belgrade and moved to the Faroe Islands when he was 15, following in the footsteps of his father, Aleksandar, who played over 60 times for Partizan Belgrade.

"It's a funny story. My dad wanted to finish his career and thought he was going to Egypt," Dordevic says of his father's move to the islands in 2001. "When you say 'Pharaoh' you think Egypt. But when he landed in the 'Faroe' Islands he saw rain and wind and fish!"

The ticket sellers in the centre of Mitrovica couldn't quite shift all 18,000 tickets for the match in the end, but it was close. Just over 15,000 supporters filled the newly renovated stands of the Olympic Stadium Adem Jashari – which is named after a founding leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the insurgent group hailed as liberators by Albanians but as terrorists by Serbs. Jashari was killed along with his family in a shoot-out before the war began. The crowd applauded as one of Jashari's successors in the KLA took his seat. Former prime minister Ramush Haradinaj was a KLA commander in western Kosovo and has twice been acquitted for war crimes in The Hague. He was recently arrested in France on an Interpol red notice issued by Serbia for alleged crimes during the war, causing a diplomatic incident after he was released.

Captain..Atli Gregersen of Vikingur

Supporters had come from all across Kosovo and many had travelled from Sweden, Norway and Germany. Two dozen miners, dressed in overalls and hard hats, had marched to the stadium after their shift had finished down the Trepca mine.

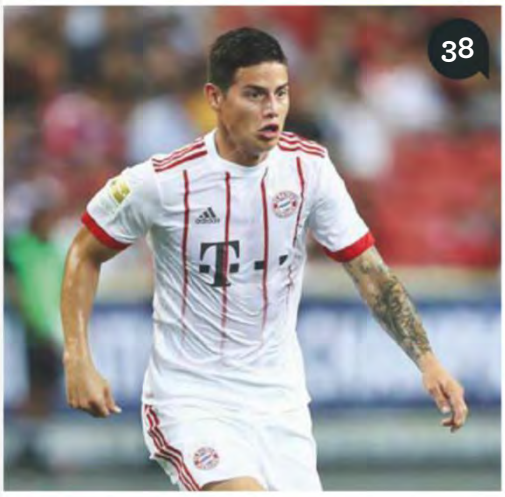
The game began in warm sunshine but the host's Champions League campaign soon began to crumble. Nigerian striker Otto was on the bench, replaced by a young Kosovar striker Blerand Kurtishaj, making his debut, who was sent off within half an hour for two stupid yellow-card challenges while chasing down the ball. By the start of the second half, Vikingur were 4-0 up. When the fourth goal went in, the crowd began to chant "shame, shame". Otto was brought on late in the game but it wasn't enough and Vikingur won 4-1.

Kosovar journalists wait for the Trepca '89 players, almost all of whom ran past, unwilling to talk, pulling their shirts over their heads. "Everybody was feeling very bad," says coach Zekirija Ramadani, a former Macedonia international who'd been in charge since the start of the year.

"We lost only one game. We didn't lose a life. We need to get back to playing football." WS

SEASON PREVIEW

2017-18



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Belgian coaches are a disappearing breed

A look at the line-up of this season's coaches tells a story: of the 16 incumbents, only six are Belgian nationals. However, of last term's top seven, only Anderlecht were led by a non-Belgian.

So why the current trend? Is it just a case of "a prophet is not without honour except in his own country", or is it that those available don't cut the mustard?

Hugo Broos, who is now 65, won the league with Club Brugge and Anderlecht but has not worked in his homeland since 2011. Last year he submitted an online application for the Cameroon coach's position, got the job and won the 2017 African Nations Cup. And a list of Belgian coaches currently "between jobs" would include Peter Maes, Georges Leekens, Glen De Boeck, Frankie Vercauteren, Enzo Scifo and Bob Peeters.

A big factor in all of this could be the influence of foreign ownership.

Maes, for example, was effective at Genk and favourite for the Antwerp job until Luciano D'Onofrio arrived on the scene and installed his old chum Laszlo Boloni as coach. D'Onofrio is Italian and knows Belgium well, but he would have no interest in installing someone as coach simply because he was a local.

Similarly, Vincent Tan, who bought Kortrijk in 2015, isn't particularly interested in appointing a Belgian and employs a Greek, Yannis Anastasiou

With Eupen being owned by the Qatar government, they are coached by a Spaniard, Jordi Condom, who has strong links to the Aspire Zone Foundation, while Mouscron are basically a vehicle for agent Pini Zahavi's investments, so he puts his faith in Romania's Mircea Rednic.

Then there are clubs that want success above all else and would certainly appoint a Belgian if they thought he was the right man for the job. However, in recent years that's become a less popular option.

Anderlecht set the trend last year with Rene Weiler, an unknown who immediately took the club to the title. Genk followed suit by appointing little-known Albert Stuivenberg – once an assistant to Louis Van Gaal at Manchester United – at the beginning of the year and he has started impressively and there are high hopes this time around.

Club Brugge have also taken that path by appointing Ivan Leko, who had just one season in charge at Sint-Truiden. Standard Liege have gone

Links...Eupen's Jordi Condom

Unknown...champion coach Rene Weiler (left)

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION A: 2017-18

1 Anderlecht
2 Antwerp
3 Charleroi
4 Club Brugge (Bruges)
5 Eupen
6 Genk
7 Gent
8 Kortrijk
9 Lokeren
10 Mechelen
11 Mouscron
12 Oostende (Ostend)
13 Sint-Truiden
14 Standard Liege
15 Waasland-Beveren (Beveren)
16 Zulte-Waregem (Waregem)

TALKING POINTS

● Anderlecht won the league under Rene Weiler last season, but he lost Youri Tielemans this summer and retaining the title might be testing.
● After failing at Dinamo Zagreb, Franko Andrijasevic was named player of the season in Croatia as his club Rijeka took the title last year. Great things are expected of him at Gent.
● With their fans expected to make a lot of noise and some big-name players still expected to arrive at the Bosuil stadium, Antwerp are all set to remind people of their former glories on their return to the top flight.
● Ivan Leko earned respect for his work at Sint-Truiden in his first coaching job, but there will be more pressure at Club Brugge, where he ought to be given time to succeed.
● A relative unknown when he took over at Genk, Albert Stuivenberg shows plenty of promise as a coach and says he doesn't want to have a team "that plays well without winning".
● Standard Liege fans are accustomed to being long suffering. Once again, they have a new coach and will be preying that good things will happen this term.
● A former number two at Club Brugge, Philippe Clement felt he had done enough to be appointed to the top job. Instead, he'll have to show what he can do in charge at Waasland-Beveren.

Big hope...Andrijasevic

Pressure...Charleroi keeper Parfait Mandanda keeps out Zulte-Waregem

for someone who is hardly a household name in Belgium, opting for Ricardo Sa Pinto, who has managed seven clubs in five years. Their chances of the title remain slim. Lokeren also chose a foreign coach, Runar Kristinsson of Iceland, mainly on the basis that he was once a loyal servant of the club.

As for the Belgians, Michel Preud'homme took Club Brugge into the Champions League qualifying rounds last term and then promptly resigned, while former assistant Philippe Clement has taken over at Waasland-Beveren.

Hein Vanhaezebrouck's Gent, Yves Vanderhaeghe's Oostende and Francky Dury's Zulte-Waregem qualified for the Europa League, while Felice Mazzu's Charleroi and Yannick Ferrera's Mechelen punched above their weight.

But it's not just a trend in the league. When Georges Leekens resigned as coach of the national team in 2012, the job went to his assistant Marc Wilmots and Belgium rose to the top of the FIFA rankings. But it couldn't last, and rather than replace Wilmots with another Belgian his successor was a Spaniard, Roberto Martinez. The jury is still out as to whether that was a wise appointment. All will be revealed in Russia, or sooner.

John Chapman

ONES TO WATCH

▲ HENRY ONYEKURU *(Anderlecht)*
Displayed potential with Eupen. Now on loan from Everton, he must progress before heading for the Premier League.

▲ SVEN KUMS *(Anderlecht)*
Things didn't work out at Udinese, but he will be happier at Anderlecht and could be a very influential figure.

▲ NIC LOMBAERTS *(Oostende)*
Back in Belgium after a decade in Russia with Zenit, he'll be an important component at an ambitious club.

▲ IVAN SAPONJIC *(Zulte-Waregem)*
The teenage striker is on loan from Benfica and part of the Serbia under-20 side that won the World Cup in 2015.

▲ ALEJANDRO POZUELO *(Genk)*
Once at Swansea City, he now makes Genk tick and they will be hoping that they can hang on to him.

▲ GUILLERMO OCHOA *(Standard Liege)*
Keeper who was with Granada in Spain last term and conceded the most goals, but also made the most saves.

▲ RILEY McGREE *(Club Brugge)*
Australian midfielder who, at 18, is following in the footsteps of Mat Ryan and Frank Farina.

Records smashed as clubs splash the cash

Defensive option...Danilo

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE 2017-18

1 Arsenal *(London)*
Chelsea
Crystal Palace
Tottenham Hotspur
West Ham United
2 Bournemouth
3 Brighton
4 Burnley
5 Everton *(Liverpool)*
Liverpool
6 Huddersfield Town
7 Leicester City
8 Manchester City
Manchester United
9 Newcastle United
10 Southampton
11 Stoke City
12 Swansea City
13 Watford
14 West Bromwich Albion

It's been another summer of record transfer spending in the Premier League. With the ink barely dry on the new bumper TV deal with Sky and BT, clubs were quick to spend the extra money, with only a handful refraining from joining in the spending spree.

Manchester City, with Pep Guardiola having last term endured his first trophyless season as a coach, led the way, investing a record £200million on new players, while Manchester United were not far behind, splashing out in excess of £146m by the start of August.

Chelsea's outlay on new signings was £125m, with £58m of that going on club record signing Alvaro Morata from Real Madrid. Others who broke their transfer record were Liverpool (Mohamed Salah, £36.9m, Roma), Arsenal (Alexandre Lacazette, £57.2m, Lyon), West Ham (Marko Arnautovic, £20m, Stoke) and Bournemouth (Nathan Ake, £20m, Chelsea), plus new boys Huddersfield (Steve Mounie, £12m, Montpellier) and Brighton (Mat Ryan, £5.5m, Valencia).

Manchester City's spending included £164m on their defence, with three new full-backs – Benjamin Mendy (Monaco, £52m), Danilo (Real Madrid, £27m) and Kyle Walker (Tottenham Hotspur, £46m) – as Guardiola seeks to address one of the major failings of his side last season. They replace Aleksander Kolarov, Gael Clichy and Bacary Sagna, and Guardiola can have no complaints about the strength of his squad.

Bernardo Silva (£45.2m, Monaco)

PROMOTED TEAMS

NEWCASTLE UNITED
Bounced back at the first attempt with Rafa Benitez still in charge, despite concerns over a lack of serious money spent so far this summer. The huge fanbase will back the team but it may not be an easy return.

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION
After years in the lower divisions, often without a ground, the Seagulls have benefitted from huge investment from fan Tony Bloom, who has spent almost £300m, covering losses and building an impressive new stadium. Manager Chris Hughton has Premier League experience but his squad lacks quality.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN
Promoted via the play-offs after David Wagner galvanised a squad with one of the lowest budgets in the Championship. The German, a close friend of Jurgen Klopp, has a long list of new names to work with, including Steve Mounie.

Big money... Alvaro Morata

gives the Spaniard yet another exciting attacking option, while the signing of Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson (£31m, Benfica) is a recognition that last season's experiment – banishing Joe Hart and hiring sweeper-keeper Claudio Bravo – was a significant factor in City's failure to rival champions Chelsea and runners-up Tottenham.

Of last season's top six only Spurs did not join the spending spree, although chairman Daniel Levy's traditionally difficult negotiating stance probably played a role in their lack of activity in June and July. The sale of Walker to City was too good to turn down, especially with Kieran Trippier a more than adequate replacement. Manager Mauricio Pochettino suggested some frustration with this approach when he said: "How have Manchester City, Liverpool, Chelsea and different clubs tried to improve their season? Bringing players and trying to put more pressure on their star players, their key players – and for us we need to do that too."

> "Trying to put more pressure on their star players, their key players – we need to do that too"
> **Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino**

Unlike the previous campaign, United, Chelsea and Liverpool all have the added pressure of Champions League football this season, so City probably start as title favourites, ahead of United in Jose Mourinho's second season in charge. United may well have overpaid for players – the 29-year-old Nemanja Matic cost £40m – but the spine of the side has been strengthened, with Swedish defender Victor Lindelof (£31.6m, Benfica) reinforcing the defence and Romelu Lukaku (£75m, Everton), despite being sold by Mourinho at Chelsea, adding firepower to replace Wayne Rooney and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Mourinho's second-season syndrome – signing a big-name centre-forward (Didier Drogba, Diego Milito, Diego Costa), reuniting with former players (Ricardo Carvalho) – has often resulted in winning the title, so the pressure is on.

Far from basking in their title success, Chelsea have endured a difficult summer, with Costa's future unresolved and tensions over Antonio Conte's new contract. Major departures – Matic, Ake and John Terry – mean the squad still seems light to compete on two fronts. The new additions so far – Tiemoue Bakayoko (Monaco, £34m), Morata (reunited with Conte who signed him for Juventus in 2014) and Antonio Rudiger

Firepower... Romelu Lukaku

TALKING POINTS

- How will Tottenham get on at their temporary Wembley home? They will play all their fixtures there while a new ground is constructed next to the site of the old stadium at White Hart Lane. Spurs struggled in last year's Champions League games at Wembley and may encounter similar problems.
- How many of England's Under-20 World Cup winners will play Premier League football this season? Most of the youngsters who triumphed in South Korea are on the books of Premier League clubs, including five at Everton. Dominic Solanke, the player of the Under-20 finals, moved from Chelsea to Liverpool after growing frustrated at the lack of opportunities at Stamford Bridge.
- Ahead of next summer's World Cup, will Joe Hart keep his spot as England's first-choice keeper? He is back in the Premier League, on loan at West Ham after his spell at Torino, in a bid to secure playing time.
- Can Sky arrest declining TV viewing figures? Despite the global popularity of the Premier League, last season saw a sharp dip in pay-TV viewers for live matches – an alarming trend for Sky as they try to cover the costs of the new bumper TV deal.
- Can Frank De Boer succeed where he failed at Internazionale? The Dutch coach had players foisted on him and was given little time to settle in Italy before he was sacked. He is trying to introduce similar tactical changes at Crystal Palace in a demanding Premier League environment.
- How seriously will Premier League teams take the cup competitions? Last season saw renewed interested in the League Cup and FA Cup from Premier League clubs who fielded stronger sides than previous years in a bid for silverware.

Frustrated...Solanke

(£32m, Roma) are astute signings, while Danish defender Andreas Christensen is back from his lengthy loan spell in the Bundesliga.

What of Liverpool? Neymar's departure from Barcelona reignited fears that Philippe Coutinho could be targeted by the Spanish club – just as Coutinho's attacking partnership with Salah and the fit-again Sadio Mane had generated much excitement on Merseyside.

So much of Arsenal's fortunes depend on the as-yet undecided future of Alexis Sanchez, with Arsene Wenger insisting the Chilean stays, even if it means he leaves on a free transfer next summer.

Some of the huge sums of money spent is trickling down – notably the Lukaku cash to Everton funding a spending spree on a host of players, including Dutch midfielder Davy Klaassen (£23.6m, Ajax) and keeper Jordan Pickford (£25m, Sunderland).

The new arrivals are likely to make life more complicated for the youngsters blooded by Koeman last season – such as midfielder Tom Davies and winger Ademola Lookman, one of five Everton players in England's world under-20 squad this summer.

Everton are the one team that could join a highly competitive top six in competing for the Champions League places and pulling away from the rest of the league. Southampton, under the highly-rated Mauricio Pellegrino, and West Ham, whose £16m signing Javier Hernandez from Bayer Leverkusen seems astute, could be outside bets for European places.

The record spending also means that, once again, it is unlikely that many youngsters will break through into Premier League first teams. Most managers, Koeman being an honorable exception, are reluctant to take the risk.

Ironically, English football enjoyed its most successful summer in international youth tournaments. In addition to the much publicised victory in the World Under-20s in South Korea, England also

Permanent switch... Nathan Ake

Spree...Davy Klaassen

ONES TO WATCH

WAYNE ROONEY
(Everton)
Back at his first club, the 31-year-old striker still has international ambitions.

ROMELU LUKAKU
(Manchester United)
An expensive reunion with Jose Mourinho, the coach who sold him while boss of Chelsea.

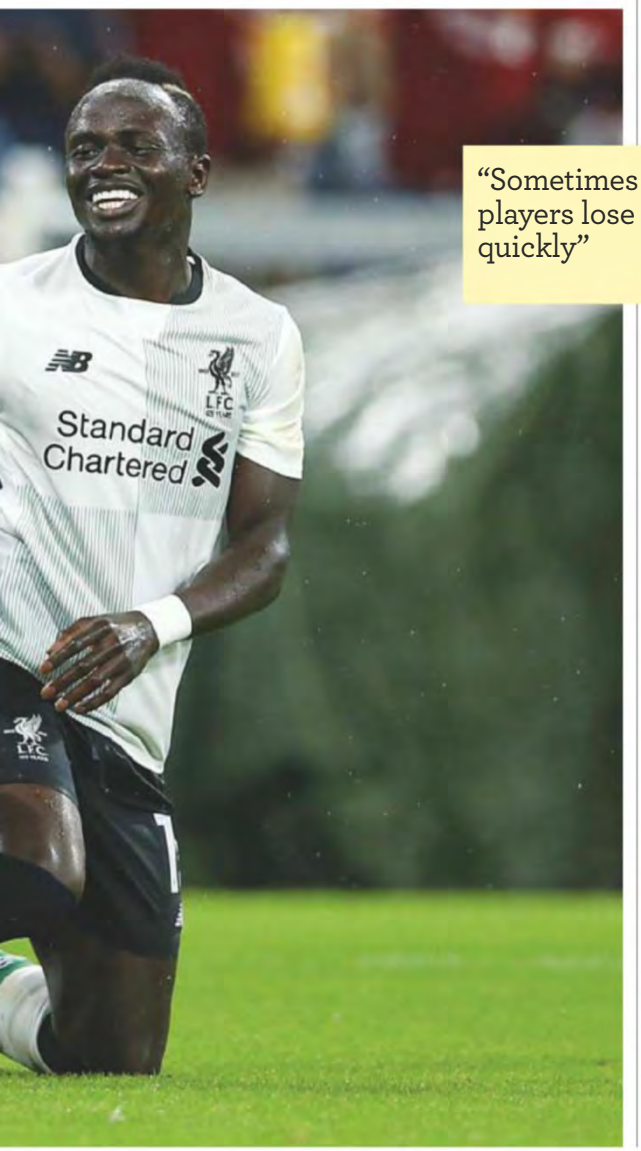
BERNARDO SILVA
(Manchester City)
The Portuguese winger who tormented City in last season's Champions League.

ALEXANDRE LACAZETTE
(Arsenal)
Prolific scorer in France got his chance of a big-money move to the Premier League.

ALVARO MORATA
(Chelsea)
High-profile replacement for Diego Costa with top-level Champions League experience.

triumphed in the European Under-19s championship, beating Portugal in Georgia. And there were impressive performances in the European Under-21s, losing in the semi-finals on penalties to Germany and finishing as runners-up to Spain, again on spot-kicks, in the European Under-17s.

One summer youth trend was that of youngsters leaving champions Chelsea permanently. Although the club's controversial loan policy is still operating – Tammy Abraham (Swansea) and Ruben Loftus-Cheek (Crystal Palace) have both gone on season-long loans – a number of prominent youngsters opted to fly the nest this summer. Dominic Solanke, star of the England under-20 success, moved to Liverpool, while Ake completed a permanent switch to Bournemouth. Nathaniel Chalobah, a key figure for England under-21s in Poland and loaned to six different clubs in his short career – joined Watford for £5m, having made only a handful of first-team appearances for Chelsea last season.



Excitement...Sadio Mane (right) and Mohamed Salah

> "Sometimes I think that the young players lose their patience very quickly"
>
> **Chelsea manager Antonio Conte**

The departures rankled with Conte who said: "Sometimes I think that the young players lose their patience very quickly. A lot of the time because of parents or the people around these players. I think the advisors are not right.

"Also you have to fight with this. The first thing they should have is good patience. Trust the club. They work hard to know very well that to play at this level you must be stronger – and very good.

"Sometimes, young players think they can play easily in the first team, but that's not true. I have to pick 11 players. Not only me, every coach."

Gavin Hamilton

NEW COACHES

MAURICIO PELLEGRINO *(Southampton)*
Saints' fourth boss in five seasons is a former assistant to Rafa Benitez. The Argentinian enjoyed great success with Alaves in Spain and replaces Claude Puel.

FRANK DE BOER *(Crystal Palace)*
Led Ajax to four straight titles but came unstuck at Inter. Hopes to promote youth and possession football at Palace, following Sam Allardyce's shock resignation.

Future...England Euro Under-19 champions

JERMAINE DEFOE *(Bournemouth)*
Relegated with Sunderland but still one of the sharpest finishers in the league.

JAVIER HERNANDEZ *(West Ham)*
Ex-Man United striker back in England after rebuilding his career at Bayer Leverkusen.

KIERAN TRIPPIER *(Tottenham)*
Replaces Man City-bound Kyle Walker and also a contender for his England place.

DEMARAI GRAY *(Leicester)*
He may be a bit of a left-field pick but the 21-year-old winger has huge potential.

ADEMOLA LOOKMAN *(Everton)*
One of England's under-20 stars and set to progress under Ronald Koeman at Everton.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Big two set to dominate again

In a country where football has been dominated by one club for so long, last season was a breath of fresh air, as a young, vibrant, attack-oriented Monaco effectively muscled the big boys out of the way and became top dogs.

But we mustn't get overly sentimental about Monaco becoming Ligue 1 champions. After all, Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev is hardly one of the game's paupers. However, Monaco, expertly managed by Portuguese coach Leonardo Jardim, were assembled for a fraction of the cost of the Paris Saint-Germain side that they so effectively pushed into second place.

> We mustn't get overly sentimental about Monaco becoming Ligue 1 champions. After all, Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev is hardly one of the game's paupers

Not only that, but Monaco played football the way fans want to see it: open, exciting, sometimes naive, but never less than thrilling.

Scoring a staggering 107 goals on the way to the title, at an average of 2.81 a game, Monaco got their hands on the title because they had superior firepower. With teenage prodigy Kylian Mbappe banging them in for fun and Colombian striker Radamel Falcao rediscovering the kind of poaching form that had made him one of European football's most feared predators, Monaco simply ran riot.

Their defence, superbly marshalled ▸

Battle...PSG's Marquinhos holds off Radamel Falcao of Monaco in July's Super Cup

Confident...Leonardo Jardim

FRENCH LIGUE 1 2017-18

1 Amiens
2 Angers
3 Bordeaux
4 Caen
5 Dijon
6 Guingamp
7 Lille *(Villeneuve-d'Ascq)*
8 Lyon *(Decines-Charpieu)*
9 Marseille
10 Metz
11 Monaco
12 Montpellier
13 Nantes
14 Nice
15 PSG *(Paris)*
16 Rennes
17 Saint-Etienne
18 Strasbourg
19 Toulouse
20 Troyes

PROMOTED TEAMS

STRASBOURG
The Alsace club won the Ligue 2 title last season and are currently enjoying an incredible period of success, having won successive promotions since 2014 to move from semi-professional football and into the top flight.

AMIENS
Another side to have reached Ligue 1 after successive promotions, they earned promotion after Emmanuel Bourgaud scored a 96th-minute winner against Reims. Gael Kakuta is back in France after a troubled period in China and will hope to bring some class to the party.

TROYES
Have pinballed between Ligue 1 and Ligue 2 since 2012 but hope their promotion play-off win against Lorient will be the catalyst for a prolonged spell in the top flight.

NEW COACHES

MICHEL DER ZAKARIAN *(Montpellier)*
The Armenian has taken over from Jean-Louis Gasset at a club where he spent 10 years as a player.

MARCELO BIELSA *(Lille)*
The 61-year-old Argentinian divides opinion in France and is looking to bring back the glory days to Lille.

CLAUDIO RANIERI *(Nantes)*
Having won the Premier League with Leicester City, can the "Tinker Man" do it again?

OSCAR GARCIA *(Saint-Etienne)*
Stepped in after the departure of Christophe Galtier, who'd been coach for seven years.

by Polish centre-half Kamil Glik, wasn't too shabby either. Their tally of 31 goals conceded was four more than PSG, but at the end of the day the difference was negligible. Solid at the back, supremely creative in midfield thanks to Bernardo Silva, and devastating in attack, Monaco thoroughly deserved their success.

Of course, there was always the fear that the team would break up as Europe's big boys came hunting for talent with open cheque books. Silva and left-back Benjamin Mendy went to Manchester City, while thundering midfield warrior Tiemoue Bakayoko joined Chelsea, while there was a queue of clubs on the trail of midfielder Thomas Lemar and Mbappe as Monaco made preparations for their title defence.

It's not all bad news, though. Monaco signed 20-year-old Belgian midfielder Youri Tielemans from Anderlecht for €25million and much is expected of him. Jardim may have his work cut out with PSG smarting from the bloody nose he gave them last season, but he is a canny operator and you wouldn't bet against him having a few tricks up his sleeve to confound the odds again.

But what of PSG? The club's Qatari owners were bitterly disappointed by a league campaign that saw the team lose five and draw six of their 38 matches under coach Unai Emery. A Champions League exit in disastrous style – beaten 6-1 in Barcelona after winning the home tie 4-0 – did nothing to lighten the mood, either. Emery is still in charge after receiving the dreaded vote of confidence but the club's ambitions have yet to be matched by performances, especially in Europe.

The veteran Brazilian full-back Dani Alves joined from Juventus, while the only other early arrival in Paris was left-back Yuri Berchiche from Real Sociedad, prompting surprise among some pundits that PSG's Qatari owners had not attempted to spend their way back to the top. News of a spectacular world-record deal for Neymar has dramatically shifted the parameters of PSG's season. The ramifications of the deal are likely to be felt around Europe for many years to come.

Nice will hope to build on the momentum they gained last season when finishing a creditable third under Lucien Favre and they have picked up veteran right-back Christophe Jallet on a free from Lyon, as well as bringing in midfielders Jean-Victor Makengo from Caen and Pierre Lees-Melou from Dijon. But it's hard to see these admittedly solid

TALKING POINTS

Impact...Depay

Loan...Saint-Maximin

- Marseille's new American owners have been saying for some time that they were ready to inject cash and have now put their money where their mouth is, bringing in experienced internationals like Adil Rami, Steve Mandanda and Luiz Gustavo. Can they put up a realistic challenge for the title this year? It looks a big ask, but you never just know.
- Winger Allan Saint-Maximin had a fine individual season on loan at relegated Bastia and is now back at parent club Monaco. With midfielder Rony Lopes also returning from a loan spell at Lille and ex-Barcelona striking prospect Jordi Mboula signed up, these new young stars could form the spine of another exciting young Monaco team.
- Winning both domestic cups last season won't have satisfied PSG, with Monaco beating them to the title and going further in the Champions League. The club's Qatari owners will be expecting much better from Unai Emery's team and they won't be afraid to spend big to match Europe's elite.
- Memphis Depay arrived in Lyon from Manchester United back in January. After a disappointing time in England he made more of an impact in France and ended the campaign with an impressive seven assists.

Home...Adil Rami

Nice guys... Jean-Victor Makengo, Pierre Lees-Melou and Adrien Tameze

ONES TO WATCH

BERTRAND TRAORE *(Lyon)*
After an impressive loan at Ajax, where he scored against Lyon in the Europa League semi-finals, OL paid Chelsea €10m for the striker.

YOURI TIELEMANS *(Monaco)*
Wanted by many of Europe's biggest clubs, the midfielder looks like a straight replacement for Tiemoue Bakayoko.

DANI ALVES *(PSG)*
At the age of 34, PSG will hope the triple Champions League winner can make it four and help to bring a first European success of the Qatari era.

LUIZ GUSTAVO *(Marseille)*
The ex-Wolfsburg midfielder looks set to play an integral part in a new-look team that will hope to deliver Champions League football.

GAEL KAKUTA *(Amiens)*
Arriving from Hebei China Fortune, will the winger finally fulfil the immense potential that attracted Chelsea in 2007?

BENJAMIN NIVET *(Troyes)*
Still going strong at 40, he will try to keep his side in the top flight. Has racked up 71 goals in two previous spells at the club.

VALERE GERMAIN *(Marseille)*
After a good loan spell at Nice, Marseille moved quickly to secure the services of the Monaco striker.

Incoming...Lyon's Mariano Diaz

signings turning the team into genuine title contenders.

Lyon – the PSG of 10 years ago – finished fourth last time out, but they have lost three key players in the close season. Besides Jallet, playmaker Corentin Tolisso has joined Bayern Munich and striker Alexandre Lacazette moved to Arsenal. Lyon have made a transfer surplus of over £50m from close-season trading, despite bringing in six new players, including Bertrand Traore from Chelsea and Mariano Diaz from Real Madrid.

France's other big hitter, Marseille, will expect to push on from last season's fifth place under coach Rudi Garcia. The south-coast club has also been busy in the transfer market, with striker Valere Germain arriving from Monaco and international defender Adil Rami returning to his home country from Sevilla. Garcia is a canny, proven coach and with American money behind him don't be surprised to see OM mounting a more serious challenge this campaign.

Interesting moves elsewhere include Dijon striker Lois Diony's switch to Saint-Etienne, Gael Kakuta's arrival at promoted Amiens, Enzo Crivelli's move from Bordeaux to Angers after a fine season on loan at Bastia and the departure of Adam Ounas from Bordeaux to Napoli.

All in all, given the exodus of players from the Principality club and PSG's ever-growing ambitions, you wouldn't bet against the capital club regaining their place as France's premier outfit this term.

Howard Johnson

Interesting...Enzo Crivelli joins Angers

YAYA SANOGO *(Toulouse)*
The striker has spent the last four seasons being loaned out by Arsenal without pulling up any trees, but Toulouse think he's worth a punt.

LOIS DIONY *(Saint-Etienne)*
Had an impressive season in Ligue 1 with Dijon last time around and his 11 league goals were key to ensuring the team's survival.

NICOLAS PEPE *(Lille)*
The 22-year-old Ivorian winger caused havoc out on the flank and helped Angers reach the Final of the French Cup.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Bundesliga to lead the way once more

Help...referees will get video assistance this season

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA 2017-18

1 Augsburg
2 Bayer Leverkusen
3 Bayern Munich
4 Borussia Dortmund
5 Borussia Monchengladbach
6 Cologne
7 Eintracht Frankfurt
8 Freiburg
9 Hamburg
10 Hanover
11 Hertha Berlin
12 Hoffenheim *(Sinsheim)*
13 Mainz
14 RB Leipzig
15 Schalke *(Gelsenkirchen)*
16 Stuttgart
17 Werder Bremen
18 Wolfsburg

Still the place for excitement-packed matches of ebb and flow, locally produced talent, a fan-first culture and stadia full-house signs, the Bundesliga becomes even more special in a World Cup season, with players' appetites suitably whetted by the prospect of taking part in the greatest show on earth.

As illustrated by Germany's recent international successes – a virtual reserve team winning the Confederations Cup and the under-21s claiming the European title – the country's strength in depth is extraordinary. And mindful that *Nationalmannschaft* boss Joachim Low has a fondness for wild-card picks, a good 40 to 50 home-based pros will be harbouring hopes of a seat on the plane to Russia next summer.

On and off the pitch, this season looks set to be awash with innovation and fresh thinking. The first major European league to commission an electronic eye to right apparent wrongs, the Bundesliga system will be used in four areas: irregularities in a goal decision (foul, handball, offside), penalty awards, red-card calls and mistaken identity. At any contentious moment, up to 17 different camera perspectives will be available and the authorities expect the review process to take between 10 and 40 seconds.

"Our intention is not for the video assistant to become the ultimate authority in these matters," explains Hellmut Krug, Germany's refereeing supremo. "The main official on the field continues to have the last word. It's his choice to take or leave the advice of the video assistant.

"The referee also has the option, in exceptional circumstances, of revisiting an incident in the video-review area on the halfway line. It's up to him whether he does that or not.

"The video assistant should intervene as little as possible – only in the case of clear errors in well-defined passages of play. We don't want to alter the character of the game. Last season, we spotted 104 decision-making mistakes. We hope to reduce that figure by three quarters. We'll be going a long way to making football fairer."

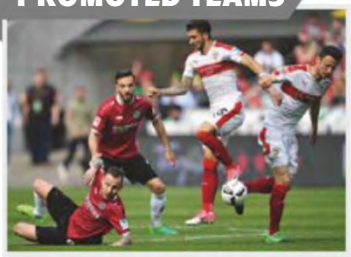
Plugging into a technological feed is not the only sign of a sport embracing progress. Hanover police officer Bibiana ▸

> "Last season, we spotted 104 decision-making mistakes. We hope to reduce that figure by three quarters. We'll be going a long way to making football fairer" **Referee boss Hellmut Krug**

Fresh start...Peter Bosz makes a point

Pioneer...female ref Bibiana Steinhaus

PROMOTED TEAMS



▲ STUTTGART
After their first relegation in 41 years, they recovered from a slow start to claim the second-tier title. Three-times Bundesliga champs – the last in 2007 – the city is a football hotbed; hence the 44,500 average gates last season.

▸ HANOVER
Also bounced straight back after relegation. However, events on the pitch are often overshadowed by the outbursts of president Martin Kind.

NEW COACHES

▼ PETER BOSZ *(Bor Dortmund)*
Former Ajax boss who should be a good fit. Has a decent record for bringing through young players, is an advocate of "Total Football" and is a strong man manager.

▼ HEIKO HERRLICH *(B Leverkusen)*
Once a striker with Leverkusen, now has to pick the club off the floor after their worst finish – 12th – in 14 years. Replaced Tayfun Korkut.

▼ SANDRO SCHWARZ *(Mainz)*
Previously in charge of the under-19 and reserve teams, he was the natural choice to succeed Martin Schmidt when he was sent packing following a disappointing campaign.

▼ DOMENICO TEDESCO *(Schalke)*
Tactically astute, he was handed his big break after just 11 games as a professional coach following an against-the-odds firefighting stint last spring with second-tier Ezrgebirge Aue.

Steinhaus is about to become the first female to referee in the top flight, having proved herself an inspiring pioneer, excellent over many years in the second tier and good enough to run the show in women's international competitions.

There are also new beginnings at some of the country's most important clubs. Dortmund are hoping for a far more congenial atmosphere now that former Ajax coach Peter Bosz has taken over from the brilliant but headstrong Thomas Tuchel, while Bayer Leverkusen and Schalke have both taken something of a gamble in the technical area gamble, appointing Jahn Regensburg's Heiko Herrlich and Domenico Tedesco of Erzgebirge Aue respectively.

Neither Herrlich or Tedesco have worked in the Bundesliga before and the latter has only coached at professional level since March. But don't write the pair off just yet. Herrlich, once in charge of Germany's under-17s and under-19s steered Regensburg from the fourth division to the second tier, while Tedesco – at 31 the youngest boss in Schalke history – is far from a no-hoper. Top of his Pro Licence class at the German coaching school, he earned praise for his work with the Stuttgart and Hoffenheim youth teams before miraculously pulling Aue out of the second-tier drop zone last spring.

Astute... Matthias Ginter (right) with Max Eberl

In marked contrast to his counterparts at Leverkusen and Schalke, Bosz does not have to come up with a root-and-branch revival plan at Dortmund. The squad he has inherited is packed with ability and they know how to get the job done domestically, finishing outside the top three once in the last seven seasons.

For the new campaign, general manager Michael Zorc has secured three exceptional signings in Turkish centre-back Omer Toprak from Leverkusen, German under-21 midfielder Mahmoud Dahoud from Gladbach and versatile 23-year-old Freiburg front-runner Maximilian Philipp. Equally crucial, leading scorer Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was told he was staying put after a summer of transfer speculation.

Dortmund's biggest headache, of course, goes by the name of Bayern Munich. Not only have the Bavarians claimed the last five Bundesliga titles, they have done so at a canter, averaging a 16-point winning margin over the runners-up. It takes a vivid imagination to see Bayern being knocked off their perch. Thanks to their financial muscle, a superstar-packed squad and top-line coaching expertise, they are running a different race to the rest of the league.

> "I don't see him as versatile enough. Yes, he can dribble and plays intelligently, but he doesn't have the tempo to deliver out wide"
>
> **Matthias Sammer on Bayern loan signing James Rodriguez**

Opportunity... Bayern loanee James Rodriguez

What often goes unnoticed is just how hungry, proud and competitive Bayern are. Expectations are so high at the club that coasting is an alien concept and they love nothing more than putting a rival in their place, the perfect example being the 5-4 victory at pretenders RB Leipzig in May, turning the game on its head with three goals in the final 10 minutes. "It's not over until we say it's over," tweeted Spanish midfielder Thiago.

Spending some €80million this summer on fresh faces, Bayern's recruitment drive mainly focused on young prospects: Hoffenheim centre-back Niklas Sule; Werder Bremen attacker Serge Gnabry – who was then

ONES TO WATCH

NADIEM AMIRI *(Hoffenheim)*
A member of the *Deutschland* under-21 squad that won the European crown, this German-born son of Afghan parents is an attacking midfielder of almost limitless potential.

JEAN-KEVIN AUGUSTIN *(RB Leipzig)*
Paris Saint-Germain may regret not placing enough faith in a striker who was the star turn as France won the 2016 European Under-19 title, letting him leave for just €13m.

FIN BARTELS *(Werder Bremen)*
The winger turned front man was key in his side going from no-hopers into a competitive force in the second half of last season. Full of ideas, he makes things happen.

LEON GORETZKA *(Schalke)*
A star of the Confederations Cup, the midfield all-rounder is strong in the tackle, creative and a cool finisher. Is said to have agreed to join Bayern Munich in 12 months' time.

KAI HAVERTZ *(Bayer Leverkusen)*
The 18-year-old midfielder has been compared to former national-team skipper Michael Ballack after displaying the same maturity and comfort on the ball.

TALKING POINTS

● Borussia Monchengladbach director of sport Max Eberl is considered one of the most astute recruiting agents in the country and he has excelled himself by bringing in centre-back Matthias Ginter, engine-room holder Denis Zakaria and goalscoring midfielder Vincenzo Grifo. A top-six place has to be a realistic aim.
● After leading Hoffenheim to fourth place last term, Julian Nagelsmann now has to prove it was no fluke. One of his biggest problems is how to replace defensive screener Sebastian Rudy who has left for Bayern Munich.

● New Bayer Leverkusen boss Heiko Herrlich certainly didn't plump for an easy option when signing on at the BayArena this summer. They failed to qualify for Europe last term for the first time in eight years – and just to twist the knife, two of their best players, Mexican striker Javier Hernandez and Turkish playmaker Hakan Calhanoglu, have joined West Ham United and Milan respectively.
● Much to the dismay of the Cologne faithful, prolific French marksman Anthony Modeste moved to Chinese side Tianjin Quanjian. His 25 league goals last season accounted for almost half the team's total.

Return...Mario Gotze

● Sidelined since February with a metabolic illness, Mario Gotze is back. The scorer of Germany's winner in the 2014 World Cup Final was involved in 11 league games last season but was in action for Dortmund in pre-season and now needs to play regularly if he is to return to the national squad.
● Despite Renato Sanches' failure to convince in his inaugural season at Bayern Munich, club president Uli Hoeness is determined not to shut the door on the young Portuguese midfielder, stating: "My feeling is that we should give him another year. I'm not for knee-jerk decisions."

Ambition...Timo Werner (right) and Emil Forsberg

loaned out to Hoffenheim – and French box-to-box midfielder Corentin Tolisso, acquired from Lyon for a record Bundesliga fee of €41.5m. The 23-year-old was infamous in France for his hot-headed tendencies and will clearly have to tone it down at his new workplace.

To further augment their already abundant options, Bayern also brought in Germany utility man Sebastian Rudy on a free from Hoffenheim and sealed a two-year loan deal for attacking midfielder James Rodriguez who, after finding himself mothballed at Real Madrid, now has an opportunity to press the reset button.

Bayern boss Carlo Ancelotti, who was Rodriguez's coach at Real during the 2014-15 season, is a huge admirer of the Colombian left-footer and will most definitely want to make him a regular starter – which could see Thiago or Thomas Muller sidelined.

Rodriguez may be a marked man in more ways than one as the "Real reject" tag is quite a burden. There are already plenty of pundits sizing him up for a fall.

"I don't see him as versatile enough," former Bayern technical director Matthias Sammer told Eurosport. "Yes, he can dribble and plays intelligently, but he doesn't have the tempo to deliver out wide.

"You could use him centrally behind a striker. However, when you put someone on him, he struggles to get free. For me, Thomas Muller brings more value. He's a free spirit and has to be granted that freedom. He's the heart and the future of Bayern. The club has to understand that."

The next 10 months or so are likely to be extremely testing for RB Leipzig, last season's shock runners-up. For all their naked ambition and economic strength, even they were not expecting to qualify for the Champions League in their first-ever Bundesliga run-out and they now have to deal with greater pressure to succeed and two tough games a week without the element of surprise.

Ironically for a club backed by the might of the Red Bull energy-drink empire, Leipzig continue to play a relatively frugal game in the transfer market, exclusively buying youngsters under the age of 24 and determined not to over-commit on the wages front. In the list of salary budgets, RB's €55m only gives them a mid-ranking spot, with Bayern, Dortmund, Gladbach, Schalke, Leverkusen and Wolfsburg paying more.

While unable to land several of their transfer targets, the *Roten Bull*en have nonetheless made a clutch of excellent acquisitions, not least Portuguese winger Bruma from Galatasaray, Paris Saint-Germain striker Jean-Kevin Augustin and Sochaux centre-back Ibrahima Konate.

Ultimately much will depend on whether RB can hang onto midfielders Naby Keita and Emil Forsberg. Both are rumoured to be keen on a move, but the Leipzig have vowed to resist.

RB director of sport and club architect Ralf Rangnick says he would he happy to finish ninth or 10th this season if his side were to imitate Leicester City and reach the last eight of the Champions League, but don't believe a word of it.

Any team featuring the likes of Keita, Forsberg and fast-maturing front-man Timo Werner will not be looking to regress. A place on the podium is where they secretly aim to end up.

Nick Bidwell

JOSHUA KIMMICH
(Bayern Munich)
Comfortable in defence or midfield, he has been earmarked to step into the right-back shoes of now-retired Bayern skipper Philipp Lahm this term.

MAXIMILIAN PHILIPP
(Borussia Dortmund)
Bought from Freiburg for €20m this summer, the German under-21 is an exciting attacking prospect. He is nimble and effective in any number of positions.

MARVIN PLATTENHARDT
(Hertha Berlin)
The 25-year-old left-back made his international debut in a friendly against Denmark in June and was a member of the country's successful Confederations Cup squad.

SIMON TERODDE
(Stuttgart)
Top scorer in the second tier last term with 25 goals, the towering striker's challenge now is to maintain those sharpshooting standards at a higher level.

JETRO WILLEMS
(Eintracht Frankfurt)
Lured from PSV for €6m, the left-back is still only 23 but has crammed a great deal into his short career, with six seasons in the Eredivisie and 22 full caps for Holland.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Ajax struck by tragedy

Although they deservedly earned praise for their way of playing, and for reaching last season's Europa League Final, Ajax finished the campaign without silverware and the heat is on to deliver.

However, even if they should succeed this term, any celebrations will be marked by sadness as tragedy struck before a ball had even been kicked in the Eredivisie.

The tragic accident happened during a pre-season training camp in Austria, when Ajax were playing Werder Bremen. With 20 minutes left to play, 20-year-old midfielder Abdelhak Nouri collapsed due to heart arrhythmias and was airlifted to a hospital. At first, his condition looked stable, with no permanent damage expected, but later that week came the horrific news that a lack of oxygen caused him to suffer permanent brain damage. He will require medical treatment for the rest of his life.

Understandably it was an enormous shock to Ajax, who Nouri had joined at the age of seven. "The blow is also hard for Ajax", said the club's chief executive, Edwin Van der Sar. "Abdelhak was such a great talent, but unfortunately we will never know how far his star would have reached if this hadn't happened to him."

Champs...Giovanni Van Bronckhorst (left) and Brad Jones

Sadly, a large part of that answer could have been given this season. As a member of Ajax's reserve team, Nouri was voted the best player in the Dutch second division last season. And having already made his Eredivisie debut, he would certainly have got more playing time under new coach Marcel Keizer following skipper Davy Klaassen's departure for Everton.

Previously Nouri's boss in the reserves, Keizer – who is a nephew of 1970s winger Piet Keizer – was a surprise choice to take charge of the Ajax first team considering his only coaching experience had been with second-tier sides Cambuur, Telstar and Emmen.

His appointment came about after the departure of Peter Bosz, who left for Borussia Dortmund citing disagreements that divided the club. Bosz revealed that during the last months of the season there was a rift between the coaching staff (him and his assistant Hendrie Kruzen) and the Ajax "treasurers" (Dennis Bergkamp and Hennie Spijkerman). Former Arsenal player Bergkamp later denied the accusations, speculating that Bosz was forcing a break to move to Germany.

It will be interesting to see if Keizer, who is known for his discipline and hard work, will survive in the Amsterdam

Tragedy...Abdelhak Nouri collapsed against Bremen

Newbies...PSV's summer signings

TALKING POINTS

- Can "rookie" coach Marcel Keizer turn the good work of Peter Bosz at Ajax into silverware in a season in which Abdelhak Nouri's situation has already cast a long shadow?
- Can Feyenoord repeat last season's title run now that many players have left? Or will it again be a long drought?
- Can Phillip Cocu revive PSV again after a mediocre and lacklustre season? Or will it be better to part company?

Benefit...Roda (in blue) and Den Haag

- Will Dick Advocaat guide Holland to the World Cup from an almost inescapable situation? Or will the Dutch FA be looking for a fourth coach in four years after the crucial qualifier against France in September?
- Will Den Haag and Roda finally get the benefit of their foreign takeovers after court cases concerning non-payment of promised money (Den Haag) and owners in jail accused of financial fraud (Roda)?

DUTCH EREDIVISIE 2017-18

pressure cooker, where a complex structure of many different opinions is always bubbling just under the surface. A few bad results is all that is needed to make his position uncomfortable. The return of Klaas-Jan Huntelaar will go some way to helping to offset the loss of Klaassen and youth products Kenny Tete and Jairo Riedewald.

As usual, the Amsterdam club will face competition for silverware from Rotterdam and Eindhoven.

At defending champions Feyenoord, coach Giovanni Van Bronckhorst will have to deal with the departures of Eljero Elia, Terence Kongolo, Steven Berghuis, Rick Karsdorp and Dirk Kuyt. The good news, however, is that they are trying to bring home prodigal son Robin Van Persie.

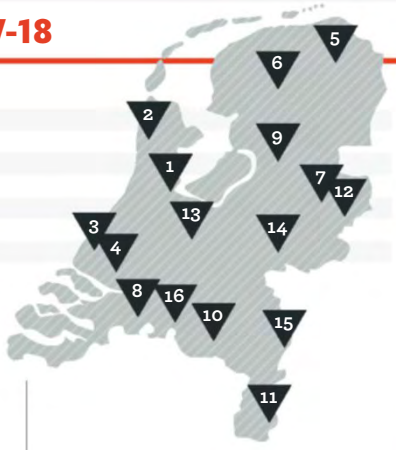
And even if Van Bronckhorst fails to get his man, the backbone of last year's successful side – goalkeeper Brad Jones, midfield anchor Karim El Ahmadi and striker Nicolai Jorgensen – is still intact and they are hungry for more success.

At PSV, coach Phillip Cocu will again rely on striker Luuk De Jong and midfielder Marco Van Ginkel, who is on loan from Chelsea for a third time. The departure of Mexican duo Hector Moreno and Andres Guardado has been compensated by the arrival of fellow countryman Hirving Lozano and AZ defender Derrick Luckassen.

While it is hard to predict who will finish the season in pole position, some will argue that the question is hardly relevant and the plight of Abdelhak Nouri shows that there are far more important things in life.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

1 Ajax *(Amsterdam)*
2 AZ *(Alkmaar)*
3 Den Haag *(The Hague)*
4 Excelsior *(Rotterdam)*
Feyenoord
Sparta
5 Groningen
6 Heerenveen
7 Heracles *(Almelo)*
8 NAC Breda
9 PEC Zwolle
10 PSV *(Eindhoven)*
11 Roda JC *(Kerkrade)*
12 Twente *(Enschede)*
13 Utrecht
14 Vitesse *(Arnhem)*
15 VVV-Venlo
16 Willem II *(Tilburg)*



ONES TO WATCH

KLAAS-JAN HUNTELAAR
(Ajax)
At 33 the striker returns home hoping to win a first national title, but will start as understudy to Kasper Dolberg.

DAVINSON SANCHEZ
(Ajax)
Combative Colombian central defender whose marking qualities are often lacked by Dutch defenders.

HIRVING LOZANO
(PSV)
Having set an example with Mexico, goals will be expected from the winger who arrives from Pachuca.

MARTIN ODEGAARD
(Heerenveen)
The Norwegian, who is on loan from Real Madrid, hasn't set the Eredivisie on fire, but he gets another chance.

NICOLAI JORGENSEN
(Feyenoord)
Scored 21 goals for the champions last term and they will rely on his firepower once more if they want to stay on top.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Bonucci switch raises the stakes

Of all the goings on in Italty this summer, none was more intriguing than the transfer of Juventus icon Leonardo Bonucci to rivals Milan.

His move was utterly fascinating as it highlights two fundamental questions. Will Juve's Serie A and Champions League ambitions be redimensioned? And does it prove that when Milan's new owners promised to take the club back to the top table of European football they meant business?

The 30-year-old, who cost Milan €42m, will be paid an annual salary of €7.5m – more with possible bonuses – making him the highest-paid player in Italian football.

Bonucci was the 10th newcomer to arrive at Milan, with perhaps more on the way, and his arrival took the club's outlay to €211m. This is far more than any other Italian club and an even bigger investment than that made by Juve last summer when their signings included the €94.7m purchase of Napoli's prolific Argentinian striker Gonzalo Higuain.

> "Something began to fall apart in the last few months and a change was the logical consequence of that"
> **Leonardo Bonucci on leaving Juventus for Milan**

Bonucci's transfer in mid-July seemed to only take about three days. In reality, it could be argued that this was a parting of the ways which probably began in February with a very public on-pitch row between the defender and Juventus coach Massmiliano Allegri during a league game against Palermo. Three days later, Allegri exiled Bonucci to the grandstand for Juve's Champions League game away to Porto.

Even though Bonucci and Allegri ▸

Backer...new Milan owner, Li Yonghong

ITALY: SERIE A 2017-18

1 Atalanta *(Bergamo)*
2 Benevento
3 Bologna
4 Cagliari
5 Chievo *(Verona)* Verona
6 Crotone
7 Fiorentina *(Florence)*
8 Genoa *(Genoa)* Sampdoria
9 Inter *(Milan)* Milan
10 Juventus *(Turin)* Torino
11 Lazio *(Rome)* Roma
12 Napoli *(Naples)*
13 Sassuolo
14 SPAL *(Ferrara)*
15 Udinese *(Udine)*

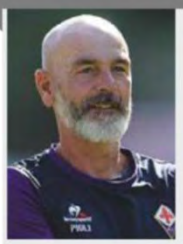
PROMOTED TEAMS

SPAL
The Ferrara-based club return to Serie A after a 49-year absence. Having gone into liquidation twice in the past 15 years, they were still in the semi-pro Serie D in 2012, but since then their rise and rise has been phenomenal. However, that upward moving curve maybe about to end.

BENEVENTO
Known to Italians as the "city of Sorcerers" since ancient Roman times, many would argue that the wizards and witches have been at work helping the team from the Campagna region into the top flight for the first time. But those same miracle workers would be well advised not to take a sabbatical as Leonardo Semplici's team will need all the help they can get if they are not to disappear back to Serie B.

VERONA
Came straight back up after last year's relegation, and with Fabio Pecchia still at the helm – and experienced campaigners such as Giampaolo Pazzini, Alessio Cerci and Thomas Heurtaux in the squad – they should be good enough to stay up.

NEW COACHES



STEFANO PIOLI
(Fiorentina)
After two seasons at Lazio and one at Inter, he now replaces Paulo Sousa and could face a tough time at Fiorentina.

CHRISTIAN BUCCHI
(Sassuolo)
Associated with lower-division clubs as a player and coach, he led Serie B side Perugia to a fourth-place finish last term.

EUSEBIO DI FRANCESCO
(Roma)
Led Sassuolo to Serie A in 2013 and kept them there, even qualifying for the Europa League with a sixth-place finish in 2016.

played down their "disagreements" as perfectly normal events in the life of a top-flight football club, those tensions were not helped by a disappointing end to a fantastic season as they were comprehensively beaten 4-1 by Real Madrid in May's Champions League Final. After the game, all manner of reports emerged suggesting that there had been bitter half-time arguments between Bonucci and team-mates Andrea Barzaglia and Paulo Dybala.

The subversive theory is that it was these half-time arguments that caused the huge disparity in performance between Juventus in the first half and Juventus in the second half. Even if all the protagonists have dismissed such claims as total inventions, what is true is that when he was officially presented as a Milan player during a pre-season tour in China, Bonucci did concede that there had been problems, saying: "You would have to say that, in the second part of the season, the relationship between both parties cooled and we agreed on a parting of the ways.

"Something began to fall apart in the last few months and a change was the logical consequence of that."

Bonucci gave no further details of his alleged disagreement with Juventus, other than to say that the Porto incident had been the straw which broke the camel's back. Needless to say, Juventus fans reacted badly to the loss of a player who, for some time now, has been widely considered not only the best central defender in Italian football but also one of the best in the world.

Former Juve legend Alessandro Del Piero revealed: "Speaking as a Juventus supporter, I don't think this is good business and I certainly did not expect this. It has come like a bolt out of the sky.

"At first I thought it was a joke. I find this very, very surprising."

Meanwhile, Milan's managing director, Piero Ausilio, called the transfer an "extraordinary re-inforcement" and one which he hopes will "complete a mosaic based on the concept of a mix between talented younger players and experienced leaders".

Ausilio and the club's Chinese ownership hope that this "mosaic" will put Milan back on the winning track after years in the doldrums under the ownership of media tycoon and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. And Milan have certainly put together a formidable squad, with those coming in including Andre Silva (Porto, €38m), Andrea Conti (Atalanta, €24m), Hakan Calhanoglu (Bayer Leverkusen, €24m), Mateo Musacchio (Villarreal, €24m), Lucas Biglia (Lazio, €17m), Ricardo

TALKING POINTS

Retiring...Cassano

Tricky test...Napoli

News...Lucas Biglia

- Runners-up last season, Roma have sold important players such as Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah (Liverpool, €39m) and German defender Antonio Rudiger (Chelsea, €35m). Their most impressive arrival, however, may turn out to be Eusebio Di Francesco – the coach who has distinguished himself by doing an excellent job for the last five seasons at Sassuolo.
- Having joined Verona this summer, Antonio Cassano announced his retirement eight days later, only to reverse his decision hours afterwards, and then walk out on the club again. The 35-year-old enfant terrible of Italian football now says that he will definitely not play again. Probably.
- Napoli have, by and large, kept their powder dry in the transfer market. However, getting through the always tricky Champions League play-offs in August could be a stern test for last season's tried and true.
- Lazio and Fiorentina made the news more for players sold – Lucas Biglia to Milan and Federico Bernardeschi to Juventus respectively – than for those they have bought. However, as the transfer market runs right through to 11.59pm on the night of August 31 there could still be plenty of surprises to come.

Arrival...Hakan Calhanoglu

ONES TO WATCH

LEONARDO BONUCCI *(Milan)*
No player will be observed more closely following his move from Juve. But can he help Milan win silverware?

ALESSIO CERCI *(Verona)*
Having missed two years through injury and a bad move to Atletico Madrid, the winger needs to get back on track.

ARKADIUSZ MILIK *(Napoli)*
Made an excellent start last season before an injury in October, he will now be looking to win back his place.

FEDERICO BERNARDESCHI *(Juventus)*
One of the great hopes of the Italian game for some time, he must now step up to the plate having left Fiorentina.

MARKO PJACA *(Juventus)*
Recovering from an injury in March, he showed enough in 20 games last term to suggest his return was worth the wait.

NIKOLA MILENKOVIC *(Fiorentina)*
A Serbian double winner with Partizan last term, the central defender has already been called "the new Vidic".

SERGIO FLOCCARI *(SPAL)*
Scored five goals in his first seven games for SPAL before an injury and his past Serie A experience could prove crucial.

Champions... Juventus remain the team to beat

Rodriguez (Wolfsburg, €15m) and Franck Kessie (Atalanta, loan).

When Fininvest, the Berlusconi family's holding company, concluded the sale of Milan to Chinese entrepreneur Li Yonghong in April for around €740m, not everyone was convinced that the new owners would splash out serious money in the transfer market. This summer's activities would seem to give the lie to those worries.

But in football, as everyone knows, spending big does not guarantee success. That point was made by former Milan coach Arrigo Sacchi, who also conceded that the excitement generated by Milan's busy summer reminded him of the atmosphere surrounding his side when he brought in such as Ruud Gullit and Marco Van Basten, to name but two.

In response, Juventus paid Fiorentina €40m for Federico Bernardeschi and also brought 20-year-old Uruguayan midfielder Rodrigo Bentancur (Boca Juniors, €9.5m), Brazilian striker Douglas Costa (Bayern Munich, loan), Mattia Di Sciglio (Milan, €12m) and Wojciech Szczesny (Arsenal, €12m).

What remains to be seen is whether, as Allegri hopes, the disappointment of the Champions League Final loss to Real will serve as a motivational starting point for the team. Having won six titles in a row, can Juve win a seventh? Or will all their energies this time be well and truly focussed on the Champions League?

In all reality, Bonucci's transfer notwithstanding, Juventus are still the side they all have to beat.

Paddy Agnew

ANDREA BELOTTI
(Torino)
Valued at €100m in December, after 26 goals in Serie A last term his coach Sinisa Mihajlovic says he is worth even more.

ALEJANDRO GOMEZ
(Atalanta)
Stands just 5ft 5in tall but a big talent who can take his share of the credit for Atalanta's fourth-place finish last term.

Loan...Douglas Costa

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Benfica gunning for '*Penta*'

Despite being Portuguese champions more times than any other team, Benfica had never collected four titles in a row – something both Sporting and Porto boasted on their list of achievements – so when the Lisbon giants thrashed Vitoria Guimaraes 5-0 at a packed Estadio da Luz in the penultimate match of last season to clinch a fourth successive Primeira Liga crown, it triggered euphoric celebrations that quickly spilled out of the stadium and spread all over the Portuguese capital long into the night.

Now the target is to match Porto's five-year run, achieved in the second half of the 1990s. "We'll be doing everything to achieve the '*Penta*'," said Benfica striker Jonas as pre-season preparations got underway.

A chink of light has emerged, however, for Sporting and Porto as they attempt to chase down Rui Vitoria's team.

It is usual for Benfica to lose one or two important players each year, but this summer three of the champions' defensive unit – goalkeeper Ederson, right-back Nelson Semedo and centre-back Victor Lindelof – have

Promoted... Portimonense

been sold. Moreover, rumours continue to swirl that the exodus is not yet finished as the club attempts to make serious inroads into its massive debt.

But the outgoing transfers do not mean Benfica will be significantly weaker. In recent seasons, big-name departures have been seamlessly replaced either by products from the club's state-of-the-art Seixal academy (Renato Sanches, Nelson Semedo) or astute low-cost purchases (Alex Grimaldo, Franco Cervi).

The club's flourishing youth system continues to be a cornerstone of its growth strategy, with president Luis Filipe Vieira repeatedly stating it is his long-term goal to build a team entirely out of academy products. Although an admirable objective, with the financial disparity between Portuguese football and Europe's wealthiest leagues getting wider and wider, and Primeira Liga clubs finding it ever harder to hold on to their top talent for any length of time, this lofty ambition is unlikely to come to fruition anytime soon.

And with no obvious successors to the recent glut of brilliant Seixal graduates, Sporting and Porto will be keen to pounce at the first sign of any drop in standards from the Eagles. And the two clubs have adopted very different approaches to this campaign.

Sporting have revolutionised their squad, buying virtually a new team, with

Real deal... Fabio Coentrao

TALKING POINTS

- Sergio Conceicao seems to have lost none of his infamous hot temper. A "friendly" against Chivas ended in chaos when Porto's coach ordered his team not to take part in the penalty shoot-out after a heated argument with the referee.
- Benfica's 37-year-old Julio Cesar and Porto's Iker Casillas, 36, were among the best keepers in the world at their peak. Time waits for no man, yet both have so far been excellent in Portugal.

Challenge... Vitoria Guimaraes

- After more than a decade in the shadow of local rivals Braga, last season saw Vitoria Guimaraes, under their astute coach Pedro Martins, better their neighbours to finish fourth. They now look to be best placed to challenge the "Big Three".
- Tondela made an astonishing escape from relegation in 2015-16, and pulled off another Houdini act last term, jumping out of the drop zone – where they had been all campaign – on the last day of the season.

expensive imports Marcos Acuna and Bruno Fernandes, as well as players surplus to requirements at Barcelona (Jeremy Mathieu), Real Madrid (Fabio Coentrao) and Roma (Seydou Doumbia). Together with the usual handful of high-quality players coming out of the youth ranks, the Lions appear to have the tools to make a sustained title challenge.

Porto, on the other hand, have opted – more out of necessity than choice – to stick to what they had last season, except for the addition of several players recalled from loan spells. It may be an unprecedented approach among Portugal's major teams when preparing for a new season, but with ex-Portugal winger Sergio Conceicao whipping underperforming players into shape, pre-season displays suggest it could be a wise strategy.

Tom Kundert

PORTUGUESE PRIMEIRA LIGA 2017-18

1 Aves
2 Belenenses *(Lisbon)*
Benfica
Sporting
3 Boavista *(Porto)*
Porto
4 Braga
5 Chaves
6 Estoril
7 Feirense *(Santa Maria da Feira)*
8 Maritimo *(Funchal, Madeira)*
9 Moreirense *(Moreira de Conegos)*
10 Pacos Ferreira
11 Portimonense
12 Rio Ave *(Vila do Conde)*
13 Tondela
14 Vitoria Guimaraes
15 Vitoria Setubal

Big guns...Benfica (in red) and Porto

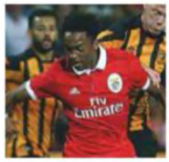
ONES TO WATCH

MARCOS ACUNA *(Sporting)*
The Argentinian winger cost €10m and will hope to make as big an impact as Bas Dost, who they paid the same fee a year ago.

BRUNO FERNANDES *(Sporting)*
Portugal's under-21 captain played in Italy as a teenager and now has the chance to shine in his home country.

OTAVIO MONTEIRO *(Porto)*
Injuries took their toll last season, but new coach Sergio Conceicao will allow the midfielder's creativity to shine.

FILIP KROVINOVIC *(Benfica)*
The Serb was great for Rio Ave last term so it was no surprise when Benfica swiftly made a move to secure his signature.



CHRIS WILLOCK *(Benfica)*
The 19-year-old Englishman swapped the bright lights of London for the Portuguese capital when moving from Arsenal.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Rodgers targets seven in a row

How do you improve on perfection? Well, Brendan Rodgers and his Celtic players will discover if that is possible between now and May.

Celtic put themselves in the record books with their remarkable 2016-17 campaign, which not only delivered three pieces of silverware but also produced an unbeaten domestic season. The Premiership, Scottish Cup and League Cup were delivered in his first season as Rodgers became only the third manager in the club's history to win a treble, after Jock Stein and Martin O'Neill.

Rodgers' side earned a record 106 points with 34 wins and four draws and the former Liverpool manager is now setting his sights on a seventh successive Scottish Premiership title for Celtic.

However, it says a lot about the Northern Irishman's desire for perfection that he has spoken almost as much about the points his team dropped last term as the games they won.

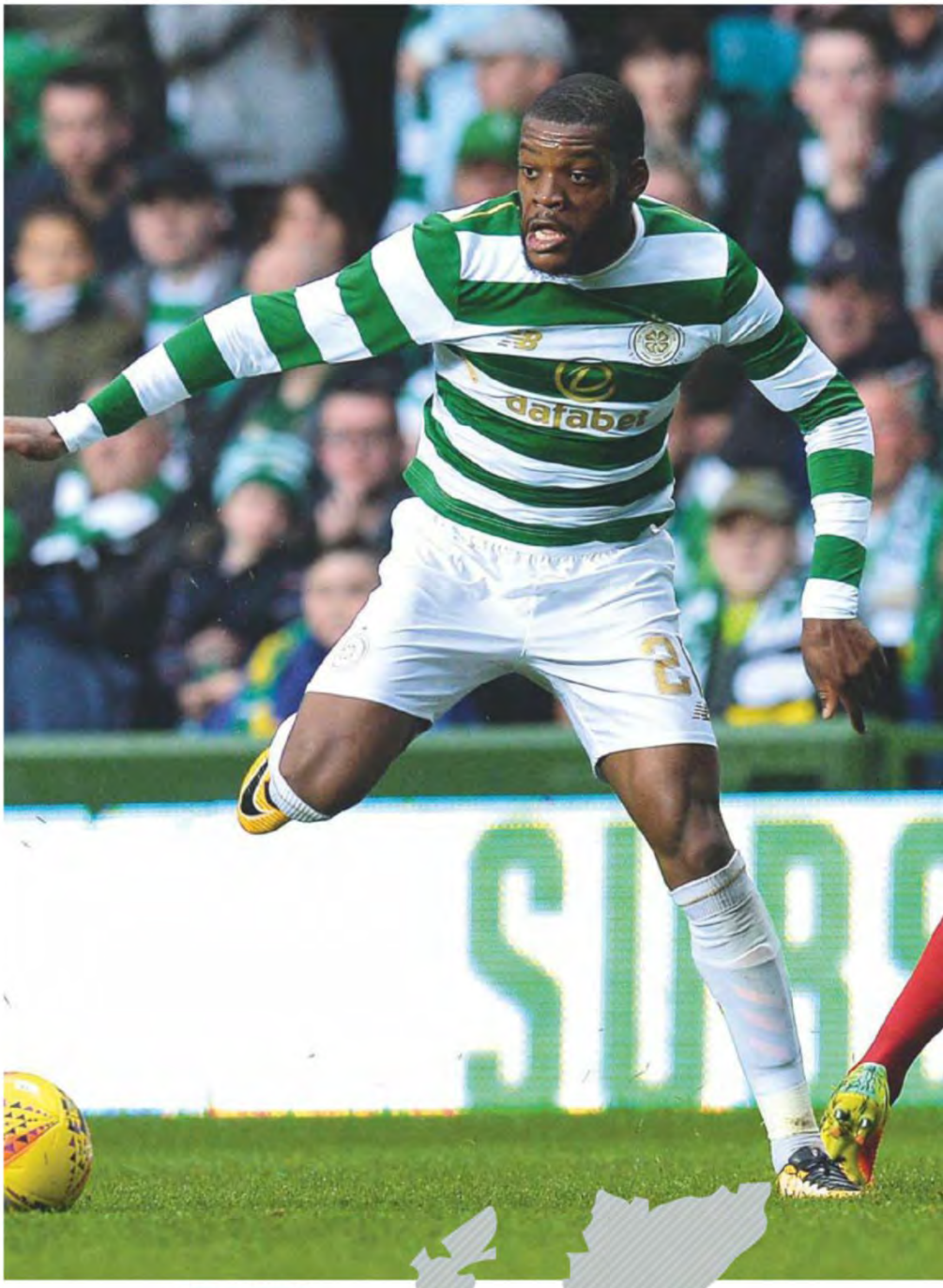
Rodgers is known for his attention to detail, so it was no surprise that he used the pre-season trip to Austria to outline his plans for Celtic's 49th league title.

"When you've had such a great season it's important that you reflect on that, but we couldn't because everyone split up on international duty right after we beat Aberdeen in the Scottish Cup final," said Rodgers. "So, we gave the players a workshop in Austria and they talked about how special it is to be here and what were the key elements to our success last year.

"But this is a new chapter this season. We have to put last year away with the club's other great memories, and defend our trophies and be the best we can be."

Rodgers has recruited young French midfielder Olivier Ntcham – who spent two years on loan at Genoa – from Manchester City for £4.5m and Irish winger Jonny Hayes, who was outstanding at Aberdeen, for £1.2m.

The pair will augment the creativity for a side in which Moussa Dembele was



Creative...Celtic's Olivier Ntcham

SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP 2017-18

1 Aberdeen
2 Celtic *(Glasgow)*
Partick Thistle
Rangers
3 Dundee
4 Hamilton Academical
5 Hearts *(Edinburgh)*
Hibernian
6 Kilmarnock
7 Motherwell
8 Ross County *(Dingwall)*
9 St Johnstone *(Perth)*

Enhanced...Hibernian are back in the top flight

outstanding after joining from Fulham.

Aberdeen will pose the greatest threat to Celtic and although Derek McInnes' side finished 30 points behind Celtic last term, the north-east side managed their best-ever total. Their performance in the Scottish Cup Final, when extra-time beckoned until Tom Rogic's 92nd-minute winner for Celtic, offers signs of hope.

The fact that McInnes' relative success at Pittodrie came on half the budget of Rangers underlines why Ibrox still has a fault-line running through it. Rangers finished 39 points behind Celtic and parted company with manager Mark Warburton in February.

His replacement, Pedro Caixinha, was off the radar coaching in the Middle East, but the Portuguese was given a rude awakening when Celtic won 5-1 at Ibrox last April in his first Glasgow derby.

Caixinha has signed nine new players, mostly from Portugal and South America (he worked in Mexico), but the pressure is already on after his side were beaten 2-1 on aggregate in the first qualifying round of the Europa League by Progres Niedekorn of Luxembourg.

The Premiership is undoubtedly enhanced by the return of Hibernian and the Edinburgh club will play to sold out crowds at Easter Road under Neil Lennon. Across the city, Hearts sacked their manager, Ian Cathro, before the league had even got underway. The 31-year-old paid the price for a penalty shoot-out defeat by Dunfermline that meant his team failed to progress from the group stage of the League Cup.

Phil Gordon

TALKING POINTS

- Moussa Dembele's double against Manchester City in the Champions League alerted several big English clubs, and although Celtic resisted £30m from Chelsea, if he scores 32 goals again this term it will be difficult to hold on to him.
- Rangers' new defender Bruno Alves will be 36 in November and will discover the pace of the Scottish game is a lot different to Russia, Turkey and Italy where he's been of late. Joey Barton and Kolo Toure failed to heed the warning that this is no "retirement home".

Experience...Bruno Alves

- Apart from Celtic St Johnstone are the only side to finish in the top five for the last five years, so it is surely only a matter of time until manager Tommy Wright is given a bigger platform in England.
- Partick Thistle have always been a place for young defenders to flourish, so it was no surprise that manager Alan Archibald's tutelage of Liam Lindsay paid off when the youngster moved south to Barnsley. Lindsay's replacement is Niall Keown, the son of former Arsenal defender, Martin.

ONES TO WATCH

SCOTT SINCLAIR *(Celtic)*
The ex-Manchester City man scored 17 goals in his first season, with countless assists, to become the league's top entertainer.

GRAHAM DORRANS *(Rangers)*
A labour of love for the midfielder, who joined the club he supported as a boy, with a £1.7m move from Norwich City.

RYAN CHRISTIE *(Aberdeen)*
Celtic have loaned the playmaker back to Pittodrie to help the development of a player who scored in the Scottish Cup semi-finals last term.

KYLE LAFFERTY *(Hearts)*
The Northern Ireland striker has been more prolific for country than club during spells in Switzerland, Italy, Turkey and England.

SIMON MURRAY *(Hibernian)*
His goals almost took Dundee United back to the top flight and his pace will augment Lennon's team. His dad, Garry, played for Hibs.

TURN THIS WAY FOR MORE PREVIEWS

Federation in chaos after Villar's arrest

A month before the season was due to start, and two days before the fixtures were announced, police arrived at the headquarters of the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) and arrested the president Angel Maria Villar. The man who had led the federation for 29 years, and had just won elections for four more, was taken to a police station nearby in Las Rozas, north-west of Madrid and was there for 12 hours, before being driven to prison at Soto del Real and incarcerated without bail.

Villar, his vice-president Juan Padron, Ramon Hernandez and Villar's son Gorka are among those who stand accused of corruption, forgery, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. Investigations focus on the accusation that Villar and those close to him benefitted personally from his position of power at the RFEF – his son, Gorka, especially, as he was involved in the organisation of matches in Korea and Latin America, winning lucrative contracts to help stage, market and broadcast them.

But there was more. A soccer school that was due to be built in Haiti after the hurricane of 2010 never materialised, despite €1.8million being entrusted to the federation. And wiretaps revealed the extent of the pressure brought to bear upon regional presidents to support Villar in the elections, offering a portrait of how he built and hung onto power. The 44-page document put together by the state prosecuting judge cites 59 people. And if it lacks definitive, decisive proof – a smoking gun – it still makes a strong case. It also makes for startling reading.

Arrested...Angel Maria Villar arrives at the Spanish federation's HQ

More details will likely be revealed as the case progresses as already, people are coming out. Villar's era is, in all probability, over – although the case will be long and drawn out, and the political fight to occupy the vacuum he leaves behind will be messy and bitter.

The Consejo Superior de Deportes, the state body that regulates sport, will push to have Villar barred from the federation. The president of the league, Javier Tebas, who has long been at war with Villar, declared: "Villar is history, but we have to root out '*villarismo*'." Tebas had supported Jorge Perez in the last elections, seeking a foothold at the federation too. Perez had been Villar's right-hand man for years.

In the immediate aftermath of the arrest, there were other pressing matters to attend to, something that reflected an uncomfortable truth: in the end, what most people care about is that the game goes on.

On the day that Villar was arrested, the RFEF announced that the assembly at which the fixtures would be confirmed could not go ahead. Football fans had waited a long time for this and now, just when the wait was almost over, it looked set to go on.

Not ready...Atletico's new stadium

It was more than just the fixtures: it was the actual dates. With four weeks to go until the season was due to start, no one had yet definitively confirmed that would actually be the weekend the season would start. Or if and when there would be a Christmas break. Or when it would all end. Every summer something seems to happen; this time there was no strike, but there was a president in the slammer.

History...Girona are promoted to La Liga for the first time

Many rolled their eyes. Others saw the federation's announcement as a means of pressure: release our president, or there's no football. The RFEF then said, simply, that they couldn't very well do the draw without their computers – and the civil guard had taken them all away.

Another announcement followed: it would only be a day more, after all, and the fixtures would happen. So, the media was back at Las Rozas, even if the president wasn't. "The league doesn't ▸

PROMOTED TEAMS

GETAFE
After 11 seasons in the top flight, the team were relegated from La Liga last year and many thought that was that. But here they are, back again at the first attempt.

GIRONA
In the top flight for the first time, they have to build their survival on two fronts: on the pitch and off it – where they are seeking to expand their support. As one player muttered of fans celebrating promotion: "Where were you in the winter?"

LEVANTE
They were the second tier's best club by a very long way and Levante's return was never in any doubt. Their survival in the first division is no forgone conclusion, though.

NEW COACHES

ERNESTO VALVERDE *(Barcelona)*
Barcelona tried to line him up as their coach twice before; both times, he said no. This time he said yes.

EDUARDO BERIZZO *(Sevilla)*
Had Celta been more decisive, Berizzo might never have been available when Sevilla came calling.

JOSE ANGEL ZIGANDA *(Athletic Bilbao)*
From the youth team to the first team, the man known as Cuco was always the next man in line at San Mames.

LUIS ZUBELDIA *(Alaves)*
Replacing Mauricio Pellegrino, he is articulate and intelligent, if previously largely unknown.

MARCELINO GARCIA TORAL *(Valencia)*
A demanding boss for a tough club. Obsessed with discipline, could he finally be the right man at Mestalla?

JUAN CARLOS UNZUE *(Celta Vigo)*
Returns to Celta, where he last worked as Luis Enrique's assistant, as he begins his solo coaching career.

MANOLO MARQUEZ *(Las Palmas)*
A last-minute shift left Las Palmas turning to their impressive B team boss for the first team.

QUIQUE SETIEN *(Real Betis)*
His Las Palmas team were wonderful in the first half of last term and dreadful in the second.

SPANISH LA LIGA 2017-18

1 Alaves *(Vitoria-Gasteiz)*
2 Athletic Bilbao
3 Atletico Madrid
Real Madrid
4 Barcelona
Espanyol
5 Celta Vigo
6 Deportivo La Coruna
7 Eibar
8 Getafe
9 Girona
10 Las Palmas
11 Leganes
12 Malaga
13 Real Betis *(Seville)*
Sevilla
14 Real Sociedad *(San Sebastian)*
15 Valencia
Levante
16 Villarreal

stop," ran one front page, which was a relief. "The league has dates; what it doesn't have is anyone in charge," read another. It was hard to avoid wedging your tongue in your cheek and responding: "Good".

The show will go on, beginning with Girona's first-ever game in the top flight, which will be against Atletico Madrid. The game was due to be in Madrid, but with work not yet finished on the new stadium, Girona will start at home.

The *clasico* will be on the final weekend before Christmas and then three weekends before the season closes. It will end with Madrid in Villarreal and Barcelona against Real Sociedad.

Actually, "begin" may not be the word. It is one thing to know which weekend the games are on, but kick-off times and dates are still unconfirmed, as is the way in Spain. But the show goes on, at least, and it will certainly be exciting for Girona.

"We have finally removed the thorn from our side," defender Jonas Ramalho said of Girona, which was the only Catalan province never to have a top-tier team, and their coach admits that it is traditionally a city of Barcelona fans – Barca go there in week six. Meanwhile, the club will announce a more formal relationship with Manchester City, their backers over the last couple of years. They are joined by Levante and Getafe, both of whom came straight back up.

It will be an exciting season for others too: a league with three new teams, eight new coaches, and plenty of new faces, plus a now-familiar cast that still includes the very best players on the planet. The lists of players in and out, in tiny type face and growing daily, number in the hundreds – and it's still early.

Much has happened already. The summer started with the news that Cristiano Ronaldo wanted to leave; weeks later, so did Neymar, and his world-record switch to PSG was set to spark a chain of further huge deals..

Others have departed and for different reasons: James Rodriguez and Alvaro Morata left the Bernabeu, and it says something about Madrid's strength in depth that they can afford to let them go – they were, after all, their top assist provider and second-top scorer last season, yet neither was a starter.

They were not the only ones to go, and there is a sad recurring theme that players right throughout the league end up swapping Spain for England.

Roque Mesa, for example, has joined Swansea City and will be missed at Las Palmas and all over the country. Spain remains a place to find quality and sometimes even at reasonable prices in a market gone mad.

It's not all departures, though. Dani Ceballos, star of the European Under-21 Championship, found Madrid and Barcelona trying to woo him, and went for the former. Adnan Januzaj joined Real Sociedad. Michel will be managing his son at Malaga, and Lucas Perez may be returning home to Coruna. Nolito is back in Spain, at Sevilla, where Ever Banega is back too.

Diego Costa will be returning soon – at least Atletico think he will. There, he

Return...Nolito

Gone...Real's Alvaro Morata (left) and James Rodriguez

Stopped...Neymar is crowded out in Barcelona's pre-season friendly against Real Madrid

TALKING POINTS

- How will Barcelona spend the Neymar cash? New coach Ernesto Valverde could use the money to re-build his squad, but the asking price of potential replacements for the Brazilian (Coutinho, Griezmann, Mbappe) will have gone up.
- Diego Simeone's old guard have defied their ages at Atletico for a long time, but can they keep doing it? They have some superb young players – some on the side, some coming through – but can they assimilate injuries or a loss of form from players like Diego Godin and Gabi?
- Will Spain be World Cup contenders once more? A new era under Julen Lopetegui has started well and has its biggest test of all early in the season with the qualifier against Italy at the Bernabeu. The early signs are positive and there's a renewed speed about the national side, while the next generation hammers at the door. Injuries and the season ahead will play their part, of course.
- Never before has a league title been a squad success quite like Madrid's last season. No one used the bench like they did and the way in which balance was maintained was remarkable. Yet there was always a sense that there was something temporary about the truce – the moment was perfect, but would not always be. That feeling was deepened by the departures this summer: put bluntly, James Rodriguez and Alvaro Morata wanted more. Zinedine Zidane will seek to replicate that tactic this season, but doing so will not be simple.

Optimistic...Michel

- Two coaches came and went, the second a disaster, and Malaga were in trouble last term, with relegation looking ever closer. But then along came Michel, and last season finished superbly. Smart, eloquent and cool, the former Madrid winger is optimistic that this season might start the same way. Or he would be if it wasn't for the growing list of departures.
- Under Quique Setien, Las Palmas played some of the most creative football in Spain last term. But then it all fell apart – not least because Setien is a purist when it comes to the play and a purist when it comes to being allowed to work too, and at Las Palmas he started to eye the interference with reticence. Now he's at Betis, they will have to let him be himself.

will join forces with Antoine Griezmann, who said it would have been a "dirty" move to have left.

Speaking of which: Sevilla announced the renewal of Vitolo's contract, amid rumours that he was off to join Atletico. The following morning, after a night of frantic phone calls, he had paid his buy-out clause and joined Las Palmas for six months, ready to arrive at Atletico when their transfer ban is lifted in the winter. Three teams in 24 hours, two teams next season, and a former club threatening legal action. Not that Vitolo should fear the civil guard turning up at his house like they did at the RFEF.

All that and it's barely got started yet. As Real Madrid's president Florentino Perez warned: "I like the final days of August best."

And there is still a long way to go until then. Better still, there's a whole season beyond that.

Sid Lowe

Arrival...Adnan Januzaj

ONES TO WATCH

DANI CEBALLOS *(Real Madrid)*
At the start of last season, he wasn't playing for Betis; by the summer, he had Barcelona and Madrid fighting over his signature.

GERARD DEULOFEU *(Barcelona)*
Returns to Barca, but will he get opportunities? And if so, will he be able to settle and perform consistently?

NELSON SEMEDO *(Barcelona)*
Barca will hope they have finally found a replacement for Dani Alves – and one that will allow them to put Sergio Roberto back in midfield.

SERGIO LEON *(Real Betis)*
The one bright point of Osasuna's season and a man with the talent and skill to be a hit if Betis can build a team that supplies him.

ISCO *(Real Madrid)*
So, is this the year that Isco – who was wonderful in the decisive weeks last year – finally takes centre stage for a full season?

AUGUSTO FERNANDEZ *(Atletico Madrid)*
Injury ruled him out for the whole of last season. Now fit again, can he raise the level of the Atletico midfield?

DANI PACHECO *(Getafe)*
Achieved two successive promotions, first at Alaves, then with Getafe, for whom he was the play-off hero.

VITOLO *Las Palmas*
Will be on a six-month loan in the Canaries before moving to Atletico Madrid having decided to leave Sevilla this summer.

PEDRO LEON *(Eibar)*
Jose Luis Mendilibar stays at Eibar, which is great for a player who admits the coach has got more out of him than anyone else.

ALVARO NEGREDO *(Valencia)*
Once a striker who seemed to have it all, but Valencia will be looking to send him elsewhere to rediscover his form.

Austria

Bundesliga

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The season kicked off on July 22, with the last of its 36 rounds due to be played on May 20. Significant early fixtures include Red Bull Salzburg at home to Austria Vienna on September 23 and Austria Vienna v Rapid Vienna on October 21.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Champions Red Bull Salzburg replaced Oscar Garcia – who jumped ship to take over at Saint-Etienne – with Marco Rose (right), the club's youth team boss.

Bosnia

Premier League

By Sasa Ibrulj

KEY DATES

The league began on July 22 and in the first phase 12 teams will play each other twice. They will then split into two groups of six. The league has one of the longest winter breaks in Europe, taking a rest between early December and mid February.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Zeljeznicar dismissed Slavko Petrovic and replaced him with Admir Adzem after exiting the Europa League and just before the start of the league campaign. FK Sarajevo sacked Mehmed Janjos after an opening day loss to Zrinjski.

Bulgaria

A PFG

By Rumen Paytashev

KEY DATES

The regular season began on July 14 and will end on March 17, with the competition finishing around May 21.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Ex-Vereya coach Alexander Tomash moved to the city rivals Beroe, whose former boss Iliyan Iliev (right) is now at Vereya.

Croatia

Prva HNL

By Sasa Ibrulj

KEY DATES

The season started on July 14 and is expected to end on May 19. The league consists of 10 teams, who play each other home and away twice, for a total of 36 games.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Dinamo Zagreb sacked Ivaylo Petev two days before the new season began and replaced him with Mario Cvitanovic (above).

Cyprus

First Division

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The standard home and away campaign begins on August 18 and ends on February 23. The top flight then mutates into six-team groups. Among the big pre-Christmas match-ups are AEK's hosting of APOEL on October 20

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

In the wake of Thomas Christensen's decision to join Leeds United, APOEL opted to bring in former Feyenoord and Genk boss Mario Been. Ex-national coach Pambos Christodoulou is the new man in charge at Omonia.

Czech Republic

First League

By Sam Beckwith

KEY DATES

The season got under way on July 28 with early games including Slavia Prague v Sparta Prague on the weekend of September 16. The season ends on May 26.

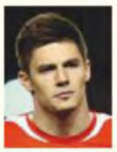
MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

In a league where foreign coaches have rarely enjoyed success, Sparta Prague have gambled on Italian Andrea Stramaccioni to replace Petr Rada.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Title-winners for the last four years, Salzburg are a hot tip to win again, although they have lost a lot of talent in recent times, most of it heading to fellow Red Bull outfit Leipzig. Under coach Thorsten Fink, Austria Vienna are a growing force.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
St Polten and Wolfsberger both look vulnerable. New St Polten director of sport Markus Schupp took an axe to the squad this summer, while Wolfsberger's team of young guns have experience or strength in depth.

ONE TO WATCH
One of the best up-and-coming strikers in the country, 24-year-old Christoph Monschein will have no room for error after controversially forcing through a transfer this summer from Admira to Austria Vienna.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Former under-21 right-back Patrick Farkas is an excellent addition to the Salzburg ranks. Resourceful and consistent, he was signed on a free from Mattersburg.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS

Zrinjski (right) will go for a fourth title in three years. Sarajevo and Zeljeznicar are ambitious but both had turbulent starts to the season.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
GOSK from the village of Gabela, with its 2,562 inhabitants, are serious relegation contenders along with Zenica, who have financial troubles and are struggling to establish a competitive squad.

ONE TO WATCH
Siroki Brijeg's Luka Menalo is still 21 but has four years of top-flight experience and the Bosnian Under-21 midfielder is highly rated.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Most of the moves were through the exit door. Last season's top goalscorer Ivan Lendric was among them, swapping Zeljeznicar for Lens.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
The favourites are the current champions Ludogorets, who are seeking a seventh title in a row. Eternal rivals Levski and CSKA Sofia will both hope to break that run – Levski were last champions in 2009, with CSKA winning in 2008.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Promoted sides Etar, Septemvri and Vitosha could struggle, along with Vereya.

ONE TO WATCH
Levski have signed Gabriel Obertan and Jordi Gomez. Both have good footballing CVs, but nobody yet knows how quickly they will adapt to their new surroundings.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Levski made all the big transfers, with French midfielder Gabriel Obertan arriving from Wigan.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Rijeka surprised everyone last season by snatching the title from Dinamo Zagreb, and these two should challenge once again. Hajduk improve with every new year but are still not contenders, while Osijek could spring a surprise or two.

RELEGATION BATTLERS

Top-flight debutants Rudes have a solid team capable of staying up. Cibalia (right) and Istra look set for another year battling at the bottom.

ONE TO WATCH

Armin Hodzic signed for Liverpool at 18 and is now at Dinamo after a loan spell in Bosnia with Zeljeznicar.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Rijeka tried to keep their team together, but will miss Franko Andrijasevic, who was sold to Belgian side Gent for €4m – the league's biggest transfer of the season so far.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
APOEL, domestic top dogs in each of the past five seasons, are odds-on to retain their title. Larnaca's AEK, with their blend of Cypriot and Spanish players, will also feel they have a shot.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Ethnikos Achna, Ermis Aradippou and Aris Limassol all have suspect rearguards. Doxa Katokopias only stayed up by the skin of their teeth last term and probably will struggle again.

ONE TO WATCH
APOEL filled the gap left by striker Pieros Sotiriou's sale to Copenhagen with Mickael Pote (right) from Turkey's Adana Demirspor.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

As usual, AEK did their shopping in Spain, picking up Sporting Gijon midfielder Nacho Cases.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Slavia Prague bought well over the summer, while Sparta also spent heavily after three years without a title. Provincial Plzen can't match the Prague pair for money but remain credible challengers.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
A summer of upheaval leaves Vysocina Jihlava looking vulnerable, while cash-strapped Slovacko will rely largely on homegrown talent. Newly promoted Sigma Olomouc and Banik Ostrava could also struggle.

ONE TO WATCH
Still only 22, Dominik Masek of Bohemians Prague 1905 made an impressive return home last term after a fruitless spell with Hamburg.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Tal Ben Chaim's move from Maccabi Tel Aviv to Sparta Prague is thought to be the most costly in Czech league history at €2.9m.

Denmark

Superliga

By Jim Holden

KEY DATES

The season began on July 14, and Copenhagen v Brondby (below) on November 5. After March 18 there are the end-of-season play-offs.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

With no coaching changes at any of the 14 Superliga clubs, does this make it the most stable league in Europe? Or is it down to the relatively short period between campaigns? Coaches tend to switch in the longer winter break.

Greece

Superleague

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The curtain rises on August 19 and falls on March 24. Early big games include Panathinaikos v Olympiakos in October.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Olympiakos have ushered in ex-Anderlecht boss Besnik Hasi (below). Last season's runners-up PAOK replaced Vladimir Ivic with Aleksandar Stanojevic.

Hungary

NB I

By Peterjon Cresswell

KEY DATES

The winter season runs from July 15 until May 19. Ferencvaros host Ujpest on October 21. They drew 2-2 in July.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Shortly after winning the league title Italian coach Marco Rossi was replaced at Honved by Holland's Erik Van der Meer. Henning Berg of Videoton made way for Marko Nikolic, a recent double winner in Serbia with Partizan.

Israel

Premier League

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The regular season runs from August 19 to March 10, then splits into championship and relegation play-off sections. Early highlights include Maccabi Tel Aviv against Beitar Jerusalem on the opening weekend.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

After five years as Maccabi Tel Aviv's director of sport, Jordi Cruyff (right) has taken over from Lito Vidigal as the club's coach.

Macedonia

First League

By Milorad Stojmanovski

KEY DATES

The championship starts on August 12 and will finish by May 19. Two teams will be relegated at the end of the season.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Qatip Osmani left neighbours FK Renova for Shkendija in June and made a decent start to his new job in the Europa League qualifiers.

Malta

Premier League

By Domenic Aquilina

KEY DATES

The league will kick off on August 18 and come to a conclusion on April 21. The FA Trophy gets under way in September, with the Final to be played on May 5.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Last season's runners-up Balzan replaced Oliver Spiteri with Marco Micovic, while Valletta appointed Zoran Popovic (left).

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
The title favourites, as always, are defending champions Copenhagen. But this year there is more optimism that Brondby and Nordsjaelland can mount a challenge under their respective dynamic coaches, Alexander Zorniger and Kasper Hjulmand.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
The two small-town promoted clubs of Hobro (below) and Helsingor, home of Hamlet's castle, are the most likely to be facing relegation this season.

ONE TO WATCH
Godsway Donyoh is a 22-year-old striker from Ghana who has begun the season in prolific form. He is part of the Right to Dream project that is at the heart of the Nordsjaelland club, giving opportunities to talented sporting kids from Africa.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Copenhagen signed Cypriot striker Pieros Sotiriou, but maybe the best acquisition will be midfielder Lasse Vigge Christensen (right), who joins Brondby from Fulham.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
With seven consecutive league titles to their name, Olympiakos effectively enjoy a silverware monopoly, but were not as omnipotent last season, with their winning margin reduced from 30 points to six. PAOK will hope to reduce it further.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Second-tier champions Apollon Smyrni probably have enough to stay up. But the other promoted club, Lamia, could be out of their depth. Asteras, Larissa and Levadiakos are all skating on thin ice.

ONE TO WATCH
Icelandic attacking midfielder Arnor Traustason is the pick of the many new arrivals at AEK. On loan from Rapid Vienna, he scored his country's winner against Austria at Euro 2016.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
PAOK have brought in a fine goalkeeper in 26-year-old Argentinian Rodrigo Rey, who has Libertadores experience with Godoy Cruz.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
With their key title-winners still at the club, Honved look a good bet to retain the league. Their nearest challengers will again be Videoton. Already out of Europe, Ferencvaros will look to reverse a year of underachievement.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Puskas Akademia return to NBI after only one season out, while Balmazujvaros are making their top-flight debut. Both are likely relegation candidates along with Debrecen, who are a long way from the side that won seven titles in 10 seasons.

ONE TO WATCH
Honved striker Kristof Herjeczki has come a long way since a trial at Reading and playing for Hungary's under-17s. Operated on for a brain tumour in 2015, he started the new season in fine form.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
International striker Tamas Priskin left Slovan Bratislava for Ferencvaros, where he is joined by Uruguayan midfielder Fernando Gorriaran (right).

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Title-winners for the last two seasons, Hapoel Be'er Sheva are hot favourites to make it three in a row. The only team who could realistically thwart them are Maccabi Tel Aviv, who have been runners-up in the past two seasons.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
A lack of firepower could be fatal for Hapoel Ashkelon, Hapoel Ra'anana and Ashdod. Newly promoted Maccabi Netanya and Hapoel Acre inhabit the same twilight zone: too good for the second tier; unable to compete with the elite.

ONE TO WATCH
Be'er Sheva fans would have been mightily relieved on hearing that Nigerian striker Anthony Nwakaeme turned down a move to China.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Maccabi Haifa should pat themselves on the back for sealing a deal with Grasshoppers for 31-year-old Brazilian playmaker Caio. He was a major source of marksmanship, creativity and spectacle in his four years in Switzerland.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Almost certainly a two-horse race between last year's winners Vardar (left) and runners-up Shkendija.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Akademija Pandev, who are owned by Genoa's Goran Pandev, should have enough to survive their top-flight debut. Fellow promoted side Skopje are relegation candidates, along with Shkupi, Renova and Pobeda.

ONE TO WATCH
Vardar's Boban Nikolov showed his potential at the summer's Euro Under-21s and a place in the senior side looks guaranteed.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Euro Under-21 midfielder Elif Elmas left Rabotnicki for Fenerbahce and, as he does not turn 18 until September, will probably play with the Turkish club's youth side until January.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Hibernians remain the team to beat and they opened up the season by beating Estonia's FCI Tallinn in the Champions League before succumbing to Red Bull Salzburg of Austria. Balzan, Valletta, Floriana and Birkirkara will challenge.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
With the Premier League increased from 10 to 14 teams, promoted Lija Athletic, Senglea Athletic and Naxxar Lions will have to battle to keep their top-tier status – as will Mosta, who only avoided relegation thanks to victory in a play-off last season.

ONE TO WATCH
Hibernians midfielder Bjorn Kristensen was player of the year in Malta and will again be the main man.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Hibernians' title defence will be boosted by the arrival of two Austrian players from Floridsdorfer AC: left-back Martin Kreuzriegler and attacking midfielder Marco Sahanek.

Moldova

National Division

By Miron Goihman

KEY DATES

With the league changing to a spring–autumn calendar in 2018, this is a shortened, transitional competition. It started on July 8 and will finish on November 25, with the 10 teams playing each other home and away.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

While Milsami and Petrocub Hincesti made changes in the summer, Zimbru Chisinau sacked Stefan Stioca after the first game of the season and appointed Iurie Osipenco. Sfintul Gheorge replaced Vadim Boret with Serghei Secu after three games.

Montenegro

First League

By Dejan Panic

KEY DATES

The league has been reduced to 10 teams, with everyone playing each other four times. The season kicked off on August 5 and early fixtures include the "Montenegrin Derby" between Sutjeska from Niksic and Buducnost of Podgorica on September 30.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Despite winning the league last season, Miodrag Vukotic left Buducnost and was replaced by Dragan Kazic. Zeta dismissed Dusan Vlaisavljevic after elimination in the Europa League and appointed his assistant, Dejan Roganovic.

Northern Ireland

NIFL Premiership

By Roy Kitson

KEY DATES

The season starts on August 12 and finishes in early May. The 12 teams play each other three times, then the top six play each other once more to decide the title, with the bottom six in a relegation group.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Barry Gray took charge at Cliftonville after previous manager Gerard Lyttle resigned to manage Sligo Rovers in the Republic of Ireland. David McAlinden takes over at Carrick Rangers, having previously been with Championship side Larne.

Poland

Ekstraklasa

By Dariusz Kurowski

KEY DATES

The season runs from July 14 to December 18 and then February 9 to April 7, after which the league is divided into two eight-team groups which compete from April 13 to May 20.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Despite declaring he wanted to work abroad, Michal Probierz moved from runners-up Jagiellonia Bialystok to Cracovia. After a two-year break, three-time title-winner Maciej Skorza took over in Pogon Szczecin.

Romania

Liga 1

By Emanuel Rosu

KEY DATES

The season started on July 14 and runs until February, with a winter break from December 18 to February 2. There are then play-offs from March 2 until June 3. The Cup Final is on May 27.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Steaua, now known as FCSB, replaced legend Laurentiu Reghecampf with Nicolae Dica. CFR Cluj appointed former Chelsea defender Dan Petrescu, Devis Mangia took charge of CSU Craiova and Edward Iordanescu joined Astra.

Russia

Premier League

By Victor Gusev

KEY DATES

The season began in mid-July and will be over on May 13, after a short winter break. The Cup Final is also in May.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Roberto Mancini (below) replaced Mircea Lucescu at Zenit and Kurban Berdyev returned to Rubin Kazan.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Newly promoted Spicul Chiscareni led the table after the opening three rounds of matches, but defending champions Sheriff are expected to be at the forefront again, challenged by Dacia Chisinau, Milsami, Zaria Balti and Zimbru Chisinau.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
With two clubs withdrawing from the top flight during the summer, at present it appears no one will be relegated. Sfintul Gheorghe, who lost their opening thee games, and Petrocub Hincesti are likely to contest bottom spot.

ONE TO WATCH
Zimbru Chisinau's 19-year-old midfielder Victor Stina put down an early-season marker with a hat-trick against Sfintul Gheorghe and is highly rated.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Brazilian striker Ricardinho was the league's top scorer with 15 goals last season but he left Sheriff to join Serbian side Red Star. Team-mate Vujadin Savic made the same move to Belgrade.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS

Mladost from Podgorica are thought to have the best squad and they will challenge city rivals Buducnost (above).

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Kom, Decic and Petrovac are expected to be in a relegation battle, while last season's runners-up Zeta could struggle after the exit of coach Vlaisavljevic and several key players.

ONE TO WATCH

Although Buducnost lost to Partizan in the Champions League qualifiers, 18-year-old midfielder Vasilije Terzic impressed.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Buducnost striker Radomir Djalovic fell out with the club and was released in the close season. His signature would be a coup for either Mladost or Rudar.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Clear favourites to retain the championship are double winners Linfield, although striker Andrew Waterworth (right) misses the start of the season with a knee injury.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Carrick Rangers, who escaped the drop by defeating Championship runners-up Institute in a play-off, will need to improve, as will Ballinamallard United. Warrenpoint Town are also likely to be embroiled in a relegation scrap.

ONE TO WATCH

Hoping to resurrect a career blighted by a serious knee injury is striker Joe Gormley, who has returned to home club Cliftonville.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Crusaders signed former Burnley goalkeeper Brian Jensen on a one-year contract after their number one was sidelined through injury.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Defending champions Legia (right) have the biggest budget and the strongest squad. Lech Poznan will also have title ambitions.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Gornik Zabrze are back after just one year and will hope to stay up. It will be harder for top-flight debutants Sandecja Nowy Sacz, however, as their stadium is being modernised they will have to play home games in Nieciecza, which is 57 miles away.

ONE TO WATCH
Robert Gumny is a 19-year-old right-back who came up through the academy at Lech Poznan.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Legia brought in strikers Armando Sadiku, from Lugano, and Cristian Pasquato, from Krylya Sovetov, while Lech signed defender Emir Dilaver, midfielders Nicklas Barkroth and Mario Situm, and striker Christian Gytkjaer.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
After losing out to Viitorul (left, blue) last term, FCSB will mount a strong challenge, while CFR Cluj (white) and Dinamo should both make their mark.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Top-flight football might just prove too much for promoted sides Sepsi and Juventus, particularly as both will have to play away from their home as their grounds did not meet the licence criteria. Financially troubled Gaz Metan Medias may also struggle.

ONE TO WATCH
Olimpiu Morutan, an 18-year-old regular at FC Botosani, is already being called a modern version of Gheorghe Hagi, with PSV and CSKA Moscow both tracking him closely.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
FCSB strengthened their side with the signing of Constantin Budescu (right) and Filipe Teixeira from Astra.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Champions Spartak and second-placed CSKA are still in good shape, with Zenit most likely to join them in the fight for the title. Krasnodar, with their new state-of-the-art arena, and Rubin Kazan should also do well.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Dinamo Moscow (below) went up but may have a hard time staying up. Tosno also came up, along with KA Khabarovsk.

ONE TO WATCH
CSKA and Russia playmaker Alan Dzagoyev, who missed Euro 2016, the Confederations Cup and half of the Premier League games last season due to four injuries, is back and set to be hugely influential.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Sebastian Driussi was signed by Zenit from River Plate for €15m. The 21-year-old signed a four-year contract and scored twice in his second game for the club.

Serbia

SuperLiga

By Vladimir Novak

KEY DATES

The season runs from July 21 to April 5, followed by another seven games in two play-off groups to decide the title, European places and relegation. The Belgrade derbies are scheduled for August 26 and December 13.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Miroslav Dukic took charge of title holders Partizan for a second stint in charge, while Red Star appointed Vladan Milojevic. Vojvodina sacked Radoslav Batak after the Europa League qualifiers and hired Nenad Vanic, who took Metalac down last term.

Slovakia

Super Liga

By Peterjon Cresswell

KEY DATES

The Liga runs from July 22 until May 27, with a winter break between December 9 and February 17. Clashes between champions Zilina and challengers Slovan Bratislava take place on September 23, and in the capital on February 24.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Nestor El Maestro (right) takes over at Spartak Trnava. Marco Rossi, who won the Hungarian title with Honved, replaces Csaba Laszlo at DAC.

Slovenia

PrvaLiga

By Peterjon Cresswell

KEY DATES

The Slovenian PrvaLiga runs from July 15 to May 27, with a winter break between December 16 and January 14. Olimpija host Maribor on August 27 and March 17, with Maribor returning the favour on November 18.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Igor Biscan, who guided Rudes to promotion in his native Croatia, earned a contract at Olimpija Ljubljana.

Switzerland

Super League

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The season started on July 22 and will end on May 19. Early clashes include Basle v Young Boys on November 4.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Basle replaced double-winner Urs Fischer with Raphael Wicky (right), who had been in charge of the under-18s and under-21s.

Turkey

Super Lig

By Nick Bidwell

KEY DATES

The seasons runs from August 13 to May 20. Dates for the diary are Fenerbahce v Besiktas on September 23; Besiktas v Istanbul BB on October 21 and Galatasaray v Fenerbahce the same weekend.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

With Dick Advocaat leaving to take charge of Holland, Fenerbahce opted to re-hire Aykut Kocaman (right), who led them to the title in 2011.

Ukraine

Premier League

By Oleg Zadernovsky

KEY DATES

The regular programme started on July 16 and ends on March 3. The 12 teams will then be divided into two groups of six for the play-off stage.

MAJOR COACHING CHANGES

Alyaksandr Khatskevich (right) took over from Serhiy Rebrov at Dynamo Kiev. Sergio Navarro took charge of Karpaty.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
As ever there are only two contenders for the title: arch-rivals Partizan and Red Star, with Partizan favourites to retain their crown.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Macva Sabac and Zemun will do well to avoid an instant return to the second tier, while Borac and Radnik could also be battling to avoid the two relegation spots.

ONE TO WATCH

One-time Partizan youth winger Nemanja Radonjic joined Red Star after failing to play a single game for Roma.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
At €1.65m, Guinean attacking midfielder Seydouba Soumah became Partizan's biggest ever transfer after scoring 23 goals for Slovan Bratislava last season.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Zilina walked the title last time out and are clear favourites once again.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Old warhorses Nitra went up and may have the experience to stay above a porous Tatran Presov side, though they could get dragged into the newly introduced relegation play-off. Zlate Moravce and Zemplin Michalovce cannot afford complacency.

ONE TO WATCH
Having broken into Slovan's first team last spring and kept a clean sheet in the Slovak Cup Final, 20-year-old keeper Dominik Greif has a bright future. Little at fault for Slovan's loss to Lyngby in the Europa League, the Slovak under-19 shows promise.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Rabiu Ibrahim, a 2007 under-17 World Cup winner with Nigeria, should brighten the Slovan Bratislava midfield.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
It would take a brave man to bet against Maribor retaining their title. Igor Biscan can probably keep Olimpija close behind, with the most realistic challenges for European places coming from Gorica and Domzale.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Hrvatini may have gained promotion at the expense of local rivals Koper but their joy will be short-lived. Fellow newcomers Triglav could also struggle. Rudar will do well to stay above the drop zone.

ONE TO WATCH
Teenage Ghanian striker Issah Abass scored in Olimpija's first two league games this season after breaking through to the first team last spring. Paired with former Tottenham youngster Nathan Oduwa, he may spring a few surprises.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Bosnian striker Jasmin Mesanovic joined Maribor after winning his domestic title with Zrinjski, while Mitch Apau (right) will stiffen Olimpija's defence.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
The smart money has to be on Basle claiming their ninth league title in a row. Last season's runners-up Young Boys recently sold their two best young talents (Denis Zakaria and Yvon Mvogo), but still have a goal machine in Guillaume Hoarau.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Lausanne's porous back-line could well propel them over the cliff edge. Once one of the league's big-hitters, Grasshoppers are a shadow of their former selves, lacking in focus and authoritative personalities.

ONE TO WATCH
On a single-season loan at Basle from Red Bull Salzburg,

teenage striker Dmitri Oberlin is, on his day, a dynamic and direct taker of chances.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

Sion spent €4m on Internazionale left-back Federico Dimarco – who then broke a metatarsal on his debut.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Fresh from back-to-back league titles, Besiktas have every reason to believe they can make club history with a third straight consecration. Fenerbahce and Galatasaray have recruited well, but do not have the holders' strength in depth.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Top-flight rookies Yeni Malatyaspor will have their work cut out, as will Goztepe, who came fifth in the second tier last term but reached the promised land through the play-offs.

ONE TO WATCH
Once a regular for Arsenal's academy side, central midfielder Oguzhan Ozyakup was increasingly influential for Besiktas last season and it is probably only a matter of time before a top European club signs him.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER

The €1.5m Fenerbahce paid Lyon for French midfielder Mathieu Valbuena could prove quite a snip.

CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGERS
Reigning champions Shakhtar Donetsk and rivals Dynamo Kiev are the only two clear contenders for the title. Both sides are superior in every aspect of football business compared to the other 10 clubs.

RELEGATION BATTLERS
Veres Rivne, along with Chornomorets Odessa and Karpaty Lviv are probably the weakest teams. Promoted side Mariupol are subsidised by the Azov Stal iron and steel works and should avoid a relegation scrap.

ONE TO WATCH
Shakhtar's Marlos is the kind of player who has the ability to settle not only a single game but the whole championship.

SIGNING OF THE SUMMER
Among the main summer transfers were Tomasz Kedziora joining Dynamo Kiev from Lech Poznan, David Khocholava joining Shakhtar Donetsk from Chornomorets Odessa and Silas arriving at Zorya Luhansk from Internacional of Brazil.

ROAD TO RUSSIA

RUSSIA

Cherchesov under growing pressure

The popular excuse for Russia's poor showing in the recent Confederations Cup was the loss of key players to injury ahead of a tournament at which the semi-finals had been decreed the minimum requirement of Stanislav Cherchesov's team by local officials, media and fans alike.

However, not all of the country's absentees were unable to play, and a sense of growing unrest is enveloping the 2018 World Cup hosts.

Igor Denisov of Lokomotiv Moscow, who is widely considered to be the country's top holding midfielder, was not invited to be part of the national set-up due to his long-standing conflict with the national coach. While Cherchesov explained the 33-year-old's omission was down to tactical considerations and peculiarities of team formation, it had not been forgotten that Denisov was put up for sale when he was coached by Cherchesov at Dynamo Moscow in 2015 and forced to train alone after he insulted his boss.

Rumours also abound about a conflict between Cherchesov and the country's biggest attacking threat, Zenit's 6ft 5in centre-forward Artem Dzyuba. Although he did join the training camp prior to the Confederations Cup, Dzyuba left a few days later with official sources and the player himself citing a knee injury. Yet on his return to Saint Petersburg he was instantly fit enough to take part in training and pre-season games.

Meanwhile, Dzyuba's fellow Zenit striker Aleksandr Kokorin and Krasnodar playmaker Pavel Mamaev were left out of the squad for disciplinary reasons after a video emerged of the pair allegedly spending €250,000 on champagne and partying in Monaco while the national anthem was playing in the background.

And to add to the scandal surrounding the non-participation of Kokorin and Dzyuba at the Confederations Cup, the day after Russia's elimination from the tournament the Zenit duo posted a message on Instagram in which they mocked Cherchesov, who is known for the thick hair on his upper lip, with a moustache-imitating gesture.

Mocked... Stanislav Cherchesov

Two more absentees from national service were CSKA Moscow playmaker Alan Dzagoev and his club-mate Mario Fernandes, the winger with Russian citizenship who has been capped by Brazil but recently qualified to play for Russia. Both were ignored due to injuries but, like Dzyuba, neither had any problem in training and playing for Zenit in July.

While CSKA goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev was selected, he fell out with Cherchesov after the tournament over the coach's rigid style of leadership. Renowned for his loyalty, and seen as undroppable since

Beaten...keeper Igor Akinfeev concedes against Mexico

he was first selected to represent his country in 2004, Akinfeev was blamed for conceding the goal that brought defeat against Mexico and cost Russia a place in the last four. At 31, he has hinted that he may now withdraw from international football.

Replacing Akinfeev will not be an easy task, with Lokomotiv's Brazilian-born Guilherme and Vladimir Gabulov of Arsenal Tula nowhere near as dependable between the sticks.

The need to find top-class defensive replacements for veteran performers was plain to see this summer. With Sergei Ignashevich, 38, and 35-year-old twins Vasili and Aleksei Berezutski all quitting the national team to concentrate on their club football with CSKA, the incoming Viktor Vasin of CSKA, Rubin Kazan's Fyodor Kudryashov and, to a lesser extent, Spartak's Georgi Dzhikiya left a lot to be desired.

> RFU president Vitaly Mutko has guaranteed Cherchesov that he will lead the team into the 2018 World Cup

Cherchesov's record since he replaced Fabio Capello in 2016 is four wins, three draws and five losses, and he has been under pressure from the start. However, the Russian Football Union president Vitaly Mutko has guaranteed Cherchesov that he will lead the team into the 2018 World Cup. Mutko said so before the Confederations Cup and then repeated his words after the tournament, despite Russia managing to beat only New Zealand in the tournament.

For now, Cherchesov will have to take Mutko at his word.

Victor Gusev

ARENA ARRIVAL REVIVES CAMPAIGN

With three assured berths for CONCACAF teams, plus a fourth available through a play-off, the USA ought to be home and dry before qualification even starts. And when Gianni Infantino's inflated 48-team monster World Cup gets going, the region will have five berths, giving the US, along with Mexico, a lifetime pass to the finals.

However, there has been a slight hiccup in proceedings this time around. After losing their opening two games – a 2-1 defeat at home to Mexico and a 4-0 thrashing in Costa Rica – the US currently sit third in the six-team group.

Those losses in November cost Jurgen Klinsmann his job, with Bruce Arena – who led the national team for eight years, between 1998 and 2006 – taking charge once more. Under Arena the USA quickly re-asserted itself, beating Honduras 6-0 and Trinidad & Tobago 2-0, and drawing 1-1 in Panama and Mexico. And of their remaining four games, three are against teams below them in the standings.

The standout result for Arena was the point earned at a jam-packed Estadio Azteca in Mexico City. The visitors went ahead after six minutes when skipper Michael Bradley caught Mexican keeper Guillermo Ochoa too far out of his goal and beat him from 40 yards. It was a stunning strike and helped squash any notion that the United States were a struggling team, low on confidence. The performance was well worth a point and banished all talk of a crisis.

After taking over, Arena had made an immediate change to the team's starting line-up.

In his final two games, Klinsmann had relied heavily on a contingent of players who had been born and grown up in Germany but had some American parentage, with Tim Chandler, John Brooks, Fabian Johnson, Jermaine Jones and Bobby Woods starting both games.

For Arena's first game, the 6-0 win at home to Honduras, only Brooks remained. Another significant move was to bring in left-back Jorge Villafana, the most promising of the USA's growing Hispanic talent pool and a player who never got a look-in under Klinsmann.

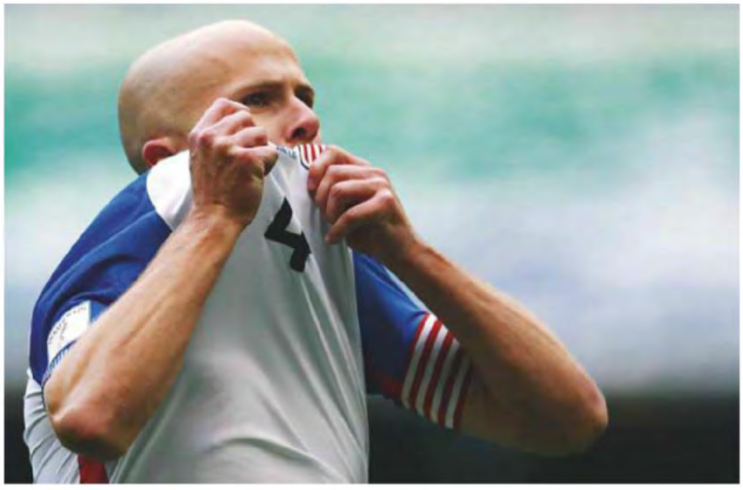
Something Klinsmann and Arena did agree on, however, is the outstanding talent of 18-year-old midfielder Christian Pulisic, a totally American product who is already playing first-team football for Borussia Dortmund. As a player with fine creative skills and a proven goalscorer, Pulisic fills the role that the US have been lacking ever since the retirement of Landon Donovan.

Arena has also chosen DeAndre Yedlin at right-back who, along with Villafana, offers attacking pace down the flanks. In between them, veteran Omar Gonzalez, who is a hold-over from Klinsmann's teams, anchors the back four, with his usual centre-back partner being Geoff Cameron.

In addition to Bradley and Pulisic in midfield, Arena likes Alejandro Bedoya of Philadelphia Union as a defensive presence, alongside Portland Timbers' Darlington Nagbe. Up front, Clint Dempsey partners Jozy Altidore, though Altidore's place is far from secure. He is under threat from 22-year old Jordan Morris of Seattle Sounders and Sporting

> Of the USA's four remaining games, three are against teams below them in the standings

Talent...teenager Christian Pulisic



Stunning...Michael Bradley celebrates his goal in the draw with Mexico

Changes...coach Bruce Arena

Kansas City's Dom Dwyer, an English-born 26-year-old who is now a naturalised American after living in the States for the past eight years.

Oddly enough, and perhaps for the first time in recent memory, if the USA does have a problem position it is in goal.

Tim Howard is 38 and clearly not as sharp as he once was, while his long-time back-up, Nick Rimando, is also 38. At 32, Brad Guzan has always been prone to erratic displays, and while Bill Hamid is a younger alternative at 26, he is short on international experience.

Even though the experienced goalkeepers are too old and the promising attacking players are too young, it is unthinkable that the USA will not qualify for Russia.

However, the prospects of a team taking shape under Arena that can pull off some surprises once the tournament starts don't look great at present.

Paul Gardner

CAMEROON COULD MISS OUT

Reigning African champions Cameroon will miss out on next year's World Cup finals unless they win at least one of their games against Nigeria in the upcoming home-and-away qualifying double-headers.

Draws against Algeria and Zambia got the Indomitable Lions' campaign off to a slow start, and confidence wasn't helped by a disappointing performance at the Confederations Cup.

Disappointing... Cameroon won just one point at the Confederations Cup

Hugo Broos' side picked up just one point and managed a solitary goal in their three games, and he knows his side need more firepower if they are to return to Russia next summer.

"If you have one [striker] in mind, please tell me his name and I'll go straight away and see him," Broos said after a 1-1 draw with Australia. "We're searching, we're searching, we're searching, and we keep on searching, but you have to be able to find one – someone who scores goals."

As a case in point, defender Michael Ngadeu-Ngadjui was the team's top scorer with two goals when they won the African Nations Cup in January.

Opponents Nigeria, meanwhile, have problems of their own – at the other end of the pitch.

With keeper Carl Ikeme undergoing treatment for leukaemia, Daniel Akpeyi was in goal for June's Nations Cup qualifier at home to South Africa. But his woeful display in the Super Eagles' 2-0 defeat has led to calls for the return of Vincent Enyeama, who quit the side after a row with former national coach Sunday Oliseh.

Criticism...Daniel Akpeyi is under pressure

With only the winners of the five African groups qualifying for the finals there is little room for error, and Egypt will all but book their ticket with two victories over Uganda.

> Hugo Broos knows his side need more firepower if they are to return to Russia next summer

They, along with Nigeria, are one of four teams with maximum points from their first two games, and two other sides with 100 per cent records meet in Group A, where Tunisia host DR Congo on September 1, before the return in Kinshasa four days later.

All four teams still have hopes of going through in Group C, where Morocco take on Mali and Gabon play Ivory Coast. And in Group D, joint-top South Africa play Cape Verde, while Burkina Faso meet Senegal, who are just a point behind the top two.

John Holmesdale

6 of the best European under-21s

Nick Bidwell profiles some of the standout players at this summer's tournament in Poland

1 Dani CEBALLOS

SPAIN

Troubled in his teenage years by severe bronchial problems, the talented linkman was a picture of health on the fields of Gdynia and Krakow, so audacious and authoritative in his playmaking skills that he was named Player of the Tournament.

He began the finals on the bench when *La Rojita* kicked off their campaign, but after coming on and excelling in a 5-0 victory against Macedonia he promptly became too important to be rationed goods. Although ultimately a silver medallist, his performances were never anything less than 24-carat gold.

One of six players in the Spanish squad to have won the European under-19 title in 2015, he is very much on an upward trajectory and recently left Real Betis for the gilded environs of Real Madrid for €18m. And he should feel right at home at the Bernabeu, where he will join fellow under-21 international Marco Asensio.

2 Stanislav LOBOTKA

SLOVAKIA

Unfortunate not to reach the semi-finals after winning two of his three group games, Lobotka proved himself to be a central midfielder of considerable potential.

The heart, lungs and brain of the Slovakian side, he was ball-winner, screener of the back-four and also an outstanding deep-lying playmaker, head and shoulders above team-mates and adversaries alike in the victories over Poland and Sweden.

He spent a year on loan at Ajax early in his career and has been in Denmark with Nordsjaelland for the past two years, where he was recently voted the most underrated player in the country. He won his first senior cap last year, and Borussia Monchengladbach and Bayer Leverkusen are among the German sides considering a bid.

3 BRUMA
PORTUGAL

Whether as an impact sub or on from the start, the incisive winger posed a constant threat with his electrifying pace, quick feet and powerful shooting. He scored three goals at the finals and his spectacular volley in a 3-1 defeat by Spain was arguably the strike of the tournament.

He joined RB Leipzig from Galatasaray for €12.5m this summer, and with his speed off the mark, directness and ability to lead the counter-attacking charge, he looks a perfect fit for the *Roten Bullen*, although he will have to tread carefully at his new club.

Doubts have been expressed about his attitude and Igor Tudor, his coach in Turkey, says: "Of my entire squad, he was the only one who didn't take any notice of what I had to tell him."

4 Lorenzo PELLEGRINI
ITALY

Fresh from a sensational Serie A campaign, the midfield all-rounder kept up the good work for the *Azzurrini*, not only showcasing his industry and flair for a well-timed forward run, but also by scoring with a spectacular overhead kick against Denmark.

His performance in Italy's vital 1-0 win over Germany in the group phase – a victory that secured qualification for the semis as group winners – hit all the right notes: tactically disciplined, thoughtful in his distribution and a menace with his long-range shooting.

After a heart scare four years ago, he has just re-signed for hometown club Roma after two highly successful seasons with Sassuolo and made his senior international debut in June.

5 Demarai GRAY
ENGLAND

On the bench for his side's first two games but increasingly influential as the Young Lions reached the semi-finals, the Leicester City winger faces the classic dilemma of locally sourced talent in England: how to get ahead when most elite clubs prefer to rely on established imports.

Since joining Leicester City from Birmingham City for £3.5m early last year, he has made just 11 Premier League starts. And although he will never forget the Foxes' fairy-tale title triumph of 2016, he clearly needs more game time if he is to fully develop.

Willowy, quick and full of tricks, he is normally used on the left wing by his club, but in Kielce and Tychy he shone as a second striker. Lively and elusive, he looked at home in the role – and, for both club and country, centre stage is where he deserves to be.

6 Jeremy TOLJAN
GERMANY

The triumphant *Deutschland* under-21s were impressive in every department, and no one caught the eye more than their jet-heeled right-back, who must now be in with a chance of promotion to Joachim Low's full squad.

Tenacious and focused in destructive mode; rapier-like and poised with the ball at his feet; he was forever looking to burst forward and set up no fewer than three goals in the tournament, including Mitchell Weiser's headed winner in the Final against Spain.

A silver medalist at the Rio Olympics last year he can also operate at left-back or in central defence. The son of an American father and Croat mother, he came through the ranks at Stuttgarter Kickers and Stuttgart in his home town before Hoffenheim paid €500,000 for his signature at the age of 16.

Glenn Moore

Barca and Juve look to kick on

More men's clubs embrace the women's game

The power of the brand, and what it could mean for the future of women's football, was underlined by one of the summer's most surprising transfers, that of England striker Toni Duggan from Manchester City to Barcelona.

The Catalan club are not the giants of the women's game that they are in the men's. Although a long-established team, they have not won their domestic league since 2015 and this season's run to the Women's Champions League semi-finals was their best to date.

So, Duggan's move was not as notable as had she moved, for example, to Lyon, who are back-to-back Champions League winners. But, along with Real Madrid and Manchester United, Barcelona are football's biggest brand – and the only one of those three involved in the adult women's game. Duggan's transfer trended on Twitter, featured on BBC news, attracted unparalleled UK print coverage and led to an invite to ITV's breakfast-television sofa.

The transfer followed news from Italy that Juventus, another of football's most storied outfits, had taken over a women's club and re-badged it under their own name. Across the French border, Marseille were linked with USA keeper Hope Solo, suggesting intent from OM to take on rivals Lyon and Paris Saint-Germain in the women's game. Meanwhile, Duggan's first club, Everton, have started signing their players to full-time professional contracts in preparation for their return to the FA Women's Super League top flight.

These are all major men's clubs and their commitment to the women's game, be it fresh or renewed, suggest that a tipping point may have been reached. Finally, it seems, the men's game is embracing the women's.

It is a trend that is also gathering pace in the US, with North Carolina Courage the latest National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) team to be partnered with a male club (NASL's North Carolina) following Portland Thorns, Houston Dash and Orlando Pride. Though Courage are actually a franchise switch from Western New York Flash, Dash and Pride are offshoots of MLS sides Houston Dynamo and Orlando City respectively, while Thorns were founder members of NWSL in 2013 and share ownership with MLS club Portland Timbers.

On both sides of the Atlantic it seems that the way forward is to be aligned with a men's club. This brings obvious advantages in respect of funding, facilities and shared expertise, and increasingly competitions are being won by such clubs. The current champions of the major European leagues are Manchester City, Wolfsburg, Lyon, Atletico Madrid and Fiorentina, all adjuncts to well-known men's clubs.

> "The fact that Juventus will now be ploughing its resources into women's football is a great step forward for the game"
>
> Juve coach Rita Guarino

The situation is similar in the Champions League. This used to be dominated by stand-alone women's clubs such as Sweden's Umea and Djurgarden/Alvsjo, Germany's Turbine Potsdam and Frankfurt, and Denmark's Fortuna Hjorring. This year, however, the last four were Lyon, PSG, Barcelona and Manchester City. Next year's competition still includes stand-alone clubs such as Glasgow City, Brescia and Fortuna Hjorring, but the majority are offshoots of men's teams, with such teams as Ajax, Lillestrom, Linfield, Sparta Prague, MTK Budapest and Scotland's Hibernian also in the competition.

Partnered...NWSL sides North Carolina Courage (in grey) and Orlando Pride

Boss...Rita Guarino

The drawback to this development is that clubs are reliant on the fortunes of the men's club and the whims of their owners. In England, Charlton Athletic disbanded their successful women's team when the men were relegated from the Premier League in 2007. The team was re-established but is yet to regain its previous standing. This year Notts County, an established WSL 1 club and 2015 Women's FA Cup finalists, folded when the parent club, which was under new ownership, said they could no longer afford to subsidise it.

County, however, are a fourth-tier men's club. Funding the losses inevitable in the women's game in the short- and medium-term will not be a problem for the likes of Juventus. Their decision to become involved follows the success of Fiorentina, who won the title in their second season. Juventus have taken over existing women's Serie A club Cuneo, 50 miles south of Turin. Rita Guarino, who won 99 caps for Italy and five league titles as a player, has been named coach.

She said: "The fact that Juventus will now be ploughing its resources into women's football is a great step forward for the game. Women's football has made great strides in the last 10 years, both on a European and global scale. A

High profile...Toni Duggan (in white) has joined Barcelona

lot of investment has gone into the game to give girls the chance to go professional and that has raised the overall level of quality significantly."

Guarino, who was previously coaching Italy's under-17s, added: "The Italian national side isn't as high in the world rankings as we would like; other countries have really kicked on in the last decade or so and left us behind. One thing that certainly isn't lacking in Italy is talent, but to take things to the next stage you need to be working full-time."

That view is followed by Everton who were awarded Notts County's vacant place in WSL 1. This was partly because they won WSL 2's Spring Series (the interim competition bridging the switch to a winter season), but also because of ambitious funding plans. The arrival of billionaire Farhad Moshiri has enabled Everton's men's club to spend heavily in the transfer market and the club's new wealth also seems set to revive a women's team that a decade ago was second only to all-conquering Arsenal.

One other development underlining the new dynamic was the transfer of Mandy Islacker from Frankfurt to Bayern Munich. Frankfurt, who are not linked to a men's club, won the league in eight of their first 11 seasons but in none of the subsequent nine. Bayern, meanwhile, have finished 1st, 1st and 2nd.

It may be too simplistic to suggest this is a move from the past to the future, for Frankfurt remain a strong side – but it rather looks that way. WS

Photo: Wilf Thorne/ISI/REX/Shutterstock

Round-up

Gold...Tony DeCicco

WINNER DECICCO DIES

Warm tributes were paid to Tony DeCicco, the former USA coach who has died of cancer aged 68.

A goalkeeper, who was capped once by the US men's team, he led the women's side to Olympic gold in 1996 and the World Cup in 1999.

Sunil Gulati, US Soccer president, said he was "one of the most influential coaches in US soccer history".

TOO HOT IN HOUSTON

Kick-off times of National Women's Soccer League games have been altered to avoid playing in "extreme heat" after Rachel Daly collapsed while playing for Houston Dash amid high humidity and temperatures exceeding 32°C.

Daly was treated in hospital after passing out during a match against

Collapsed... Rachel Daly

Seattle Reign, played under the Texan sun to facilitate TV broadcasters.

"It was a frightening experience," said Daly. "Everyone who knows me knows that I'm a player who will give everything and those conditions are not safe to play at your maximum."

ENGLISH WIN ON SAND

England won the Euro Beach Soccer Cup in Portugal, beating Switzerland 4-3 in the Final. Spain, winners of the inaugural competition last season, went out in the group stage. The tournament is run by the FIFA-affiliated Beach Soccer Worldwide. There is at present no female beach soccer FIFA World Cup, though there is a male version.

Industrial action...Scotland's national side

SCOTS STRIKE SUCCEEDS

Scottish players used their tournament debut to force the Scottish FA to improve their "terms and conditions" in the latest example of players taking industrial action. The players imposed a fortnight-long media black-out before the European Championships, refusing to do promotional work.

EQUAL PAY PLEDGE

Lewes, a non-league side in Sussex, became the first club in the UK – and possibly anywhere – to bring in equal pay for its male and female teams. The sums are small – the men play in the English eighth tier, the women in the third – but the commitment includes equality in terms of budgets, coaching, training and facilities.

FRENCH NAME HOST CITIES

The venues for the 2019 World Cup in France have been revealed. Lyon, home of the European champions, will host the opening game and Final. The other venues are Grenoble, Le Havre, Nice, Montpellier, Paris (Parc des Princes), Reims, Rennes and Valenciennes.

Final venue...the Parc Olympique Lyonnais

World Soccer vintage 40 years ago

August 1977

Revie walks out on England for UAE riches

One year before the World Cup in Argentina, Brazil's Rivelino was the cover star of *World Soccer*'s August 1977 issue, with the midfielder looking forward to his third finals appearance.

The same, however, could not be said of England, who were on the brink of failing to make it to a second successive tournament.

Don Revie had quit as manager before the qualifier at home to Italy, citing family reasons. In truth, he had been negotiating to coach the UAE.

"It's so easy to condemn Don Revie. Everyone's done it," reflected Keir Radnedge. "To walk out on England for so-called 'family reasons' was one thing. After three years of pressure you would have thought he could have stood another few months before Italy put an end to England's World Cup dreams.

"But when it was revealed he was going to feather his nest to the tune of £340,000 tax-free over four years in the United Arab Emirates, that was even worse. It seemed he had sold his soul for filthy, oily lucre."

Radnedge continued: "Revie went because he was a disastrous failure. He knew it. After his surreptitious trip to Dubai, between spying on Italy in Finland and catching up with England in Argentina, he made an attempt to negotiate a release from his England contract.

"Some cynics would say it all went wrong the day he got the England job. He wanted to build a 'club atmosphere' but the carpet bowls and the bingo sessions, which kept his Leeds players happy, didn't pacify all the men he took into the England fold. And in the latter stages of his England reign he dropped the in-depth dossiers which he prepared for his players on their opponents.

"As a club manager Revie had proved himself. But the call of national team manager needs another approach. Revie didn't appreciate that until too late. His reign was a series of paradoxes. His teams failed to convince in victory and failed to learn in defeat."

There was a dearth of talent to take over from the 1966 team. Tony Currie, Alan Hudson, Frank Worthington and Stan Bowles were skilful footballers, but whether they fitted into Revie's club atmosphere and ethos was open to question.

Radnedge considered that Revie had made up his mind to leave his position when England lost 2-0 to Italy in Rome the previous autumn, commenting: "That was the turning point for Revie. Until Rome most people were prepared to be patient, to give him time.

"After Rome it was clear time was running out. Revie himself was tearing his hair at the way some senior players ignored his instructions.

"His failure was not in running away, not in putting cash before credibility. His failure, remarkable for one of the most ultra-realistic club managers, was to ignore the evidence before him and try to build a castle on the shifting sand of players only mediocre by world standards." WS

Failure...Don Revie walks out on England

WORLD SOCCER, August, 1977 — THREE

England team manager resigns

Revie finds his oasis

by Keir Rednedge

IT'S SO easy to condemn Don Revie. Everyone's done it. To walk out on England for so-called family reasons was one thing. After three years of pressure you would have thought he could have stood another few months before Italy put an end to England's World Cup dreams.

But when it was revealed he was going to feather his nest to the tune of £340,000 tax-free over four years in the United Arab Emirates, that was even worse. It seemed he had sold his soul for filthy, oily lucre.

No one will begrudge a man changing jobs because he wants, in these insecure times, to do what he can to provide the good life for his family. What upset the applecart, gave so much offence in so many places, was the manner of his departure.

First, surely he owed better to his employers, the Football Association, than to tell them of his resignation through the columns of a daily newspaper. Good luck to the *Daily Mail*, and their soccer writer Jeff Powell, for pulling off one of Fleet Street's biggest sports scoops for years. But in leaking his intentions thus, Revie let himself down badly.

The reaction to his defection for Arabia was a stream of criticism. The old nicknames — like "Don Readies" — were brought out again, all the doubts about his role in sponsorship deals, such as the one which turned England into an advert for the Admiral sports equipment firm, were wheeled out again.

His superstitions, his 'lucky' suits — all these idiosyncrasies were repeated, examined and ridiculed.

But was this being just to Revie?

The man hasn't been born who didn't have his faults — and though I have no intention of writing an apologia for Revie, I would suggest that his critics have missed the point.

Revie went because he was a disastrous failure.

A failure, that is, as England manager.

He knew it. After his surreptitious trip to Dubai between spying on Italy in Finland and catching up with England in Argentina he made an attempt to negotiate a release from his England contract. So it's nonsense for FA officials and committeemen to say they had no idea he wanted to go.

What surprises me is that, if the UAE were prepared to pay Revie £340,000 they were not presumably prepared to wait until England's World Cup fate had been settled.

It would hardly have made much difference to soccer's progress in the Emirates if Revie had negotiated a delay until after the World Cup crunch between England and Italy at Wembley.

Had England failed, he would have been out anyway. Had they succeeded, against all the odds, in qualifying for Argentina, Revie could still have quit — with a great deal more satisfaction, I would imagine, and let someone else go to the Finals.

Where did it all go wrong?

Some cynics would say it all went wrong the day he got the England job, when the rest of the soccer world was concentrating on the 1974 World Cup Finals.

But, at the time it seemed a brave forward step for the FA to tempt the most successful of native English managers, from his club. At £25,000 a year he was being paid almost three times that of his World Cup-winning predecessor, Sir Alf Ramsey. And to earn that he stepped down at Leeds when he must have known they stood a better chance in the coming season of winning the Champions' Cup than ever before. Also their last chance.

So, he made his sacrifice.

Contract

July 4, 1974, was the date the FA came to terms with Leeds. It has been suggested they paid £100,000 to buy out the remaining five years of his contract, and immediately Revie was planning his England career on Leeds lines.

He wanted to build a "club atmosphere". But the carpet bowls and the bingo sessions which kept his Leeds players happy didn't pacify all the men he took into the England fold. And in the latter stages of his England reign he dropped the in-depth dossiers which he prepared for his players on their opponents.

Revie was a manager of fear. It was a basic part of his creed, to be wary of the other side. So wary, in fact, that eventually, instead of instilling confidence into his players, he built the opponents up into giants.

World Soccer, at the time of Revie's appointment, warned that it would be foolish to expect England's team to take on a different complexion overnight. The fact was, the right sort of players weren't available. It was a fact Revie realised, too. But, his first big mistake, having taken a dispassionate look at the players around, was to continue trying to create an entertaining team.

And he admitted to the *Daily Mail*, that as soon as he realised this, he should have "settled for a bastard of a team" rather than run himself up a cul-de-sac.

Yet look at the record of England under Revie: Only one defeat in the first 14 games over 19 months!

Ultimately Revie's problem was that he failed to get England into the quarter-finals of the European Championship, and looks like

● Continued overleaf

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FRONT COVER PICTURE
Rivelino of Brazil in action against Poland.

> **"As a club manager Revie had proved himself. But the call of national team manager needs another approach. Revie didn't appreciate that until too late"**

ENGLAND UNDER REVIE

Date	Venue	Opponents	Score	Result
1974				
Oct 30	Wembley	Czechoslovakia (EC)	3-0	W
Nov 20	Wembley	Portugal (EC)	0-0	D
1975				
Mar 12	Wembley	West Germany	2-0	W
Apr 16	Wembley	Cyprus (EC)	5-0	W
May 11	Limassol	Cyprus (EC)	1-0	W
May 17	Belfast	Northern Ireland (HI)	0-0	D
May 21	Wembley	Wales (HI)	2-2	D
May 24	Wembley	Scotland (HI)	5-1	W
Sept 3	Basle	Switzerland	2-1	W
Oct 30	Bratislava	Czechoslovakia (EC)	1-2	L
Nov 19	Lisbon	Portugal (EC)	1-1	D
1976				
Mar 24	Wrexham	Wales	2-1	W
May 8	Cardiff	Wales (HI)	1-0	W
May 11	Wembley	Northern Ireland (HI)	4-0	W
May 15	Hampden Park	Scotland (HI)	1-2	L
May 23	Los Angeles	Brazil (BT)	0-1	L
May 28	New York	Italy (BT)	3-2	W
May 31	Philadelphia	Team America (BT)	3-1	W
June 13	Helsinki	Finland (WC)	4-1	W
Sept 8	Wembley	Rep. of Ireland	1-1	D
Oct 13	Wembley	Finland (WC)	2-1	W
Nov 17	Rome	Italy (WC)	0-2	L
1977				
Feb 9	Wembley	Holland	0-2	L
Mar 30	Wembley	Luxembourg (WC)	5-0	W
May 28	Belfast	Northern Ireland (HI)	2-1	W
May 31	Wembley	Wales (HI)	0-1	L
June 4	Wembley	Scotland (HI)	1-2	L
June 8	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	0-0	D
June 12	Buenos Aires	Argentina	1-1	D
June 15	Montevideo	Uruguay	0-0	D

Overall record:
Played 30: won 15, drawn 8, lost 7, goals for 52, against 26.
Players used: 52.

Key: EC – European Championship
HI – Home Internationals
BT – Bicentennial Tournament
WC – World Cup

● *Continued from previous page*

failing to put England into the World Cup Finals.

A lot different was promised by his first match — against Czechoslovakia, back in October, 1974, in the European Championship.

For a start there was the new team strip — by courtesy of Admiral. Then there was the Revie-introduced 'Land of Hope and Glory' for the crowd to sing before the kick-off. Revie hoped the fans wouldn't expect miracles, but, he promised: "If we have two goals, we'll go for four. If we have four, we'll go for six."

It sounded exciting . . . and England did win 3-0. But in the hullabaloo afterwards it was largely ignored that it was only the second half introduction of a couple of substitutes which upset the Czechoslovaks. Three weeks later Portugal came to Wembley and drew 0-0. The Revie bubble was already about to burst.

Sadly it wouldn't be long before the team grew used to walking off at half-time with chants of "What a load of rubbish" in their ears.

By and large Revie drew loyalty from most of his players. He had problems with Alan Hudson and Alan Ball. The one, having shone against West Germany, let it be known that he wasn't enamoured of the new set-up, and virtually asked to be left out. The second, Ball, a World Cup-winning veteran of 11 years ago, was surprisingly dropped from the team and the captaincy, but himself justified Revie's decision by some remarkably inopportune newspaper interviews.

We've said before, that Revie expected too much. In using 52 players in 30 games no-one stuck in the team throughout. He was unlucky with the injury-stricken Gerry Francis, his original choice as captain, and Manchester City's hapless Colin Bell. But in their absence he gambled wildly on repeated team changes, and none of them paid off.

It's all right ringing the changes in a club atmosphere when your players are totally familiar with each other's style. But to try that game — as Revie did in the 5-0 win over Luxembourg — with men who meet more often in opposition than in harmony, is too much.

As a club manager Revie had proved himself. But, the call of national team manager needs another approach. Revie didn't appreciate that until too late. His reign was a series of paradoxes. His teams failed to convince in victory, and failed to learn in defeat. It seemed Revie was getting it together a year ago during the Bicentennial Tournament. A 1-0 defeat by Brazil, a 3-2 victory over Italy and an easy 3-1 win over Team America provided glimpses of the club spirit Revie desired. To emphasise the promise, England then won 4-1 away to Finland in their opening World Cup fixture.

But back at Wembley in the autumn the bright summer had faded. A 1-1 draw with the Republic of Ireland, an embarrassing 2-1 win over Finland, then the 2-0 defeat in Rome by Italy.

That was the turning point for Revie. Until Rome most people were prepared to be patient. To give him time. After Rome it was clear time was running out. Revie himself was tearing his hair at the way some senior players ignored his instructions.

Then Holland came to Wembley to underline England's basic problem — lack of good enough players. It was the beginning of the end. Luxembourg were beaten, so were Northern Ireland. But Wales won at Wembley, so did Scotland, and though England may have been unbeaten for the first time in a South American tour, their defensive demeanour in Rio, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo provided nothing towards the return with Italy.

But by then, Revie knew, presumably, that from his point of view, it didn't matter. Someone else would have to worry about Italy. He was off to one of the back ends of the world of soccer.

Revie was the most short-lived of England managers (excluding 1974 caretaker Joe Mercer). Walter Winterbottom stayed for 16 years, Sir Alf Ramsey for 11; Revie for just three years, eight days.

His failure was not in running away; not in putting cash before credibility. His failure, remarkable for one of the most ultra-realistic club managers, was to ignore the evidence before him and try to build a castle on the shifting sand of players only mediocre by world standards.

The *manner* of his departure was sad and does the image of England's soccer no good. The *fact* of his departure is no loss. If England are to be eliminated from the World Cup now it matters not who is the manager for the second clash with Italy.

What *does* matter is that the new man, whoever he may be, can build on the strengths of England's football. And if Revie's reign proved nothing else, it showed that Sir Alf Ramsey was a much-maligned man.

Sibley for QPR

DON REVIE's resignation as England manager was the tip — albeit a substantial one — of an iceberg of top managerial changes in the oldest league in the world.

Undoubtedly the major shock on the domestic scene was Manchester United's sacking of controversial Scot **Tommy Docherty** because of his affair with the wife of the club's physiotherapist.

In his place United signed up **Dave Sexton**, the top coach who, after leaving Chelsea, had turned Queen's Park Rangers into one of the most attractive and progressive English teams. QPR filled the gap by appointing Sexton's erstwhile deputy, **Frank Sibley**, a former wing half with the club.

Another surprise in London was the split between Chelsea, who had just earned promotion from the second division, and manager **Eddie McCreadie**.

The Scot foolishly tried to push the debt-ridden club into giving him a rich new contract, and threatened to resign if they didn't. President Brian Mears called McCreadie's bluff . . . and assistant **Ken Shellito**, a former England right back, is the new boss.

Meanwhile **Frank McLintock** retired from playing at 37, while still doing a sound job in the centre of the Queen's Park Rangers' defence, and jumps straight in as manager at Leicester, who parted company peacefully from the thoughtful **Jimmy Bloomfield**.

Also in the Midlands **Tony Waddington** quit Stoke and **George Eastham** stepped up as manager, while **Johnny Giles** resigned from West Bromwich to give former Wolves, Bilbao and Sporting Lisbon manager **Ronnie Allen** a chance to return to top soccer.

Former England and Leeds defender **Jackie Charlton** resigned after creating a highly effective, if unimpressive Middlesbrough.

Also in this issue...

p23
Keir Radnedge reported on the Spanish Cup Final, noting: "For sheer basic drama there won't be many Cup Finals to rival the climax to the Spanish season, when outsiders Betis of Seville managed to beat Athletic Bilbao after 19 penalties at the end of extra-time"

BETIS WIN SPANISH CUP

p28
Valencia's Mario Kempes was back in favour with Argentina's national team. With the country due to host the 1978 World Cup and in a run of poor form, coach Cesar Luis Menotti reversed his decision of not picking the striker in recent friendlies and La Liga's leading goalscorer returned to the fold.

KEMPES RECALL BY ARGENTINA

p36-37
Dukla Prague, who were the dominant side in Czechoslovakia, were the subject of a Club Focus after becoming league champions for the first time in more than a decade.

DUKLA PRAGUE CHAMPIONS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

p42-43
Following Liverpool's European Cup triumph in May, and with their playing personnel changing ahead of the new season, Arthur Rotmil asked: "Can Liverpool, minus the departed Keegan, the retired Smith, and possibly without the crippled Toshack and the ageing Callaghan, continue at the top in Europe? Is there enough motivation? Will they find the inspiration to repeat their success?" Within weeks, they had bought Kenny Dalglish from Celtic.

Can Liverpool retain the Cup
VELAZQUEZ RELEASED BY MADRID

10 years ago
Sevilla's Antonio Puerta dies in hospital three days after suffering a series of cardiac arrests on the pitch during a game against Getafe. Fans pay tribute to the player at Estadio Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan.

20 years ago
Cruzeiro win the Libertadores Cup for only the second time in their history, and 21 years after their first triumph. They beat Sporting Cristal of Peru 1-0 on aggregate, with Elivelton scoring the winner in the 75th minute of the second leg.

30 years ago
After leaving Liverpool in the summer, Ian Rush plays his first game for Juventus in a pre-season tournament. Meanwhile, Rush's former Anfield team-mate, Graeme Souness, is sent off in the Old Firm derby for Rangers against Celtic at Parkhead.

40 years ago
New York Cosmos beat Seattle Sounders 2-1 to win the Soccer Bowl for the second time in five years. Steve Hunt and Giorgio Chinaglia score the goals for a team containing Franz Beckenbauer, Carlos Alberto and Pele.

50 years ago
Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper Pat Jennings scores with a long drop-kick from within his own penalty area against Manchester United at Old Trafford in the Charity Shield. The match finishes in a 3-3 draw.

FATMA SAMOURA

"We do take very seriously the promotion and protection of human rights"

FIFA's secretary-general shares her thoughts on the first 12 months of her tenure and what the future holds in store for football's governing body

So, what does Fatma Samoura really do? Not what FIFA secretary-generals used to do, that's for sure...

FIFA reforms made certain of that by clipping the secretary-general's wings. They also clipped the wings of the president, but Gianni Infantino found a way around that, albeit with the democratic approval of council and congress.

Secretary-general is a big title, copied from the United Nations and embraced increasingly by other international sports federations in pursuit of self-agrandisement. Under Samoura's high-profile predecessor, Jerome Valcke, it was a licence to spend at least a week or more every month out of the office giving prospective World Cup hosts "a kick up the backside", negotiating sponsorship deals with the biggest multinationals, and sorting out the World Cup ticketing and hospitality contracts (which eventually brought him down).

These days the job's prime focus – apart from embracing ambassadorial essentials – is more concerned with internal management and imposing as strict accountability as is possible on the worldwide development projects which devour most of FIFA's income.

Critics who believe FIFA's credibility has been fatally undermined by the excesses of the Sepp Blatter regime, and judge it no longer fit for purpose, have yet to come up with a new model to promote and develop the game.

Such an idea would not even occur to Samoura. Her appointment, just over a year ago, was an Infantino-inspired shock for council, congress and the wider football world. But the former UN official has no illusions about the job, the mistakes of the past or the media scrutiny.

Her first year has been a sharp learning curve.

How have you found your first year as secretary-general?
I'm still in a learning process but the main priority was to focus on implementing the reforms. There has been significant progress when it comes to, for example, putting in place a new administrative structure. That is, putting the governance of football and transparency – but also sustainability – into every action we take.

Have you spent much time out of the office?
I've attended many tournaments. I started with the European Championship in France last year, then the Champions League. I went to the United States to attend the Copa Centenario, to CAF on two occasions at the beginning and closing of the Nations Cup. To Colombia for the CONMEBOL congress, to the Beach Soccer World Cup in the Bahamas and to the opening of the Under-20 FIFA World Cup in South Korea. Then I've spent two weeks in Russia for my first big international tournament with the Confederations Cup.

How important is it that a woman has such a high-profile role within FIFA?
A lot has happened in terms of improving diversity, especially promoting gender parity within FIFA, starting with the executive committee. The last female member of the FIFA Council was elected two months ago in Bahrain so we now have six women representing each of the confederations, and a secretary-general, where a little while ago there were – how to say this – not that many of us. We have a fully functioning women's division that is very active in finalising an ambitious strategy of having 60million women players registered by 2020.

What changes have you witnessed over the past 12 months?
We are doing a lot in terms of investing in football through our member associations and the budget for the cycle 2015-2018 is equivalent to $1.6bn, meaning that between 80 to 86 per cent of FIFA revenues is reinvested either in the education or the development of football. We have real football players in the house with, for example, Marco Van Basten heading the technical division. They are working on modernising the refereeing with the video assistance refereeing system that has been in a test phase at the FIFA Confederations Cup. We are also implementing reform by putting in place a full audit and compliance division, really putting governance at the centre of the world governing body. More monitoring has been happening for [construction] workers to see who we can align with to improve working conditions in Russia and also in Qatar. We do take very seriously the promotion and protection of human rights and, with the creation of a specific advisory board, we are now really working towards emphasising human rights when it comes to football and FIFA tournaments.

Coming into such a major role, where do you start?
First I started speaking with the staff. That was something they needed because the gap of communication with the previous leadership was so huge. So one of my first promises was to put in place an association, or a kind of club, in an atmosphere that is conducive to a dialogue, where the staff will feel free to express ➤

adidas
FIFA

Close...with FIFA president Gianni Infantino

themselves about working and living conditions in FIFA without fear of being reprimanded. A hotline was put in place for people to use to inform on wrongdoings. Most important, I have a wonderful team and they have been really open and very warm in welcoming me and I didn't find it difficult to be integrated. They have a wealth of experience, coming from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. What unites the majority of the people is their passion about football so they really understand why we needed to change, why we wanted to take lessons from the mistakes of the past and bring cultural and structural changes. The overall aim is to make sure we are transparent, we are a credible organisation and we really promote governance through every single action we have taken.

What were the negative aspects?
As with any real change there are challenges. People, when they are confronted with new ways like imposing new internal control systems, develop resistance – not because they don't think it's a positive thing but it's a different way of doing business. The scandal was an eye opener for all of them and they know that the only way we can survive is through changes and they are taking it very seriously.

What are your next priorities?
The first is to put in place solid monetary mechanisms for the flagship Forward programme being implemented by the member associations. FIFA is supporting all 211 [members] to have better compliance systems, better internal monitoring systems and also a systematic internal audit of how they are using the funds. We want to be able to account for ever single penny that is disbursed by FIFA. We are also opening 10 regional offices whose main job is to be the first port of call when it comes to implementing the Forward programme and advising on what FIFA can avail to them when it comes to the training of coaches and referees, the opening of academies, purchasing artificial pitches, purchasing equipment, participating in youth tournaments and developing women's football. This is something that resonates with the associations because they want to see FIFA more involved in the development and promotion of the game. We are also working towards delivering the best World Cup next year in Russia and preparing the Women's World Cup in France in 2019, starting with the Under-20 World Cup next year. Simultaneously, we continue to train people as much as we can and develop a permanent dialogue through the FIFA football summits and bilateral discussion.

Watching...Mexico (in green) take on Germany at the Confederations Cup

Bearing in mind how often you are both out of the office, how closely can you work with the president on all these projects?
When we are not both travelling it is every day, but we catch up every week at least with a short report from all the divisions to keep him informed of all the main activities we are conducting. But, if it comes to taking a big decision which involves the bureau of the council, then it is just a phone call or our offices are separated by just 30 metres.

How have you adjusted to the highly intense media focus?
Football is the number one sport in the world and its reach is unrivalled. People who love football speak with their hearts, so to me it's understandable that the scrutiny is high when you are touching the hearts and minds of so many people. We have a strong internal communications team who are aware of everything that's going on – not only to do with FIFA but generally in the world. So whenever I come to a meeting I know that the journalists will not only focus on the particular issue but other things that are of interest to their own audience. So, to return to your first question, it wasn't easy, my first year, but it was very exciting.

Interview by Keir Radnedge

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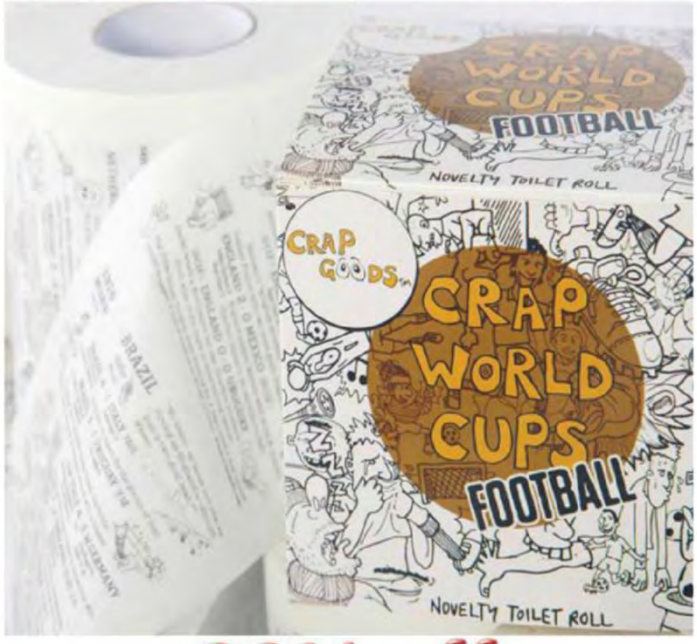

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BELGIUM: FIRST DIVISION A

JULY 28
Antwerp v Anderlecht

JULY 29
Charleroi v Kortrijk
Eupen v Zulte Waregem
Genk v Waasland-Beveren
Lokeren v Club Brugge

JULY 30
Mechelen v Standard Liege
Oostende v Mouscron
Sint-Truiden v Gent

AUGUST 4
Standard Liege v Genk

AUGUST 5
Kortrijk v Lokeren
Mouscron v Charleroi
Waasland-Beveren v Mechelen
Zulte Waregem v Sint-Truiden

AUGUST 6
Anderlecht v Oostende
Club Brugge v Eupen
Gent v Antwerp

AUGUST 11
Zulte Waregem v Club Brugge

AUGUST 12
Eupen v Kortrijk
Lokeren v Mouscron
Mechelen v Gent
Oostende v Waasland-Beveren

AUGUST 13
Antwerp v Genk
Charleroi v Anderlecht
Sint-Truiden v Standard Liege

AUGUST 18
Standard Liege v Zulte Waregem

AUGUST 19
Eupen v Oostende
Genk v Charleroi
Kortrijk v Club Brugge
Mechelen v Antwerp
Mouscron v Gent
Waasland-Beveren v Lokeren

AUGUST 20
Anderlecht v Sint-Truiden

AUGUST 25
Kortrijk v Mouscron

AUGUST 26
Charleroi v Zulte Waregem
Genk v Mechelen
Lokeren v Eupen
Sint-Truiden v Waasland-Beveren

AUGUST 27
Club Brugge v Standard Liege
Gent v Anderlecht
Oostende v Antwerp

SEPTEMBER 8
Anderlecht v Lokeren

SEPTEMBER 9
Antwerp v Sint-Truiden
Mouscron v Club Brugge
Waasland-Beveren v Eupen Zulte Waregem v Kortrijk

SEPTEMBER 10
Gent v Genk
Mechelen v Oostende
Standard Liege v Charleroi

SEPTEMBER 16
Charleroi v Waasland-Beveren
Club Brugge v Mechelen
Eupen v Standard Liege
Kortrijk v Anderlecht
Lokeren v Antwerp
Oostende v Gent
Sint-Truiden v Genk
Zulte Waregem v Mouscron

SEPTEMBER 23
Antwerp v Kortrijk
Charleroi v Club Brugge
Genk v Oostende
Gent v Zulte Waregem
Mechelen v Sint-Truiden
Mouscron v Eupen
Standard Liege v Lokeren
Waasland-Beveren v Anderlecht

SEPTEMBER 30
Anderlecht v Standard Liege
Club Brugge v Gent
Eupen v Genk
Kortrijk v Oostende
Mouscron v Mechelen
Sint-Truiden v Charleroi
Waasland-Beveren v Antwerp
Zulte Waregem v Lokeren

OCTOBER 14
Antwerp v Zulte Waregem
Charleroi v Eupen
Genk v Mouscron
Gent v Waasland-Beveren
Lokeren v Sint-Truiden
Mechelen v Anderlecht
Oostende v Club Brugge
Standard Liege v Kortrijk

OCTOBER 21
Anderlecht v Genk
Club Brugge v Antwerp
Eupen v Mechelen
Kortrijk v Gent
Lokeren v Charleroi
Mouscron v Standard Liege
Sint-Truiden v Oostende
Zulte Waregem v Waasland-Beveren

OCTOBER 25
Anderlecht v Zulte Waregem
Antwerp v Standard Liege
Genk v Club Brugge
Gent v Eupen
Mechelen v Lokeren
Oostende v Charleroi
Sint-Truiden v Mouscron
Waasland-Beveren v Kortrijk

OCTOBER 28
Charleroi v Gent
Club Brugge v Sint-Truiden
Eupen v Anderlecht
Kortrijk v Genk
Lokeren v Oostende
Mouscron v Antwerp
Standard Liege v Waasland-Beveren
Zulte Waregem v Mechelen

NOVEMBER 4
Anderlecht v Club Brugge
Antwerp v Charleroi
Genk v Lokeren
Gent v Standard Liege
Mechelen v Kortrijk
Oostende v Zulte Waregem
Sint-Truiden v Eupen
Waasland-Beveren v Mouscron

NOVEMBER 18
Charleroi v Mechelen
Club Brugge v Waasland-Beveren
Eupen v Antwerp
Kortrijk v Sint-Truiden
Lokeren v Gent
Mouscron v Anderlecht
Standard Liege v Oostende
Zulte Waregem v Genk

NOVEMBER 25
Anderlecht v Kortrijk
Antwerp v Mechelen
Club Brugge v Zulte Waregem
Genk v Standard Liege
Gent v Mouscron
Oostende v Eupen
Sint-Truiden v Lokeren
Waasland-Beveren v Charleroi

DECEMBER 2
Charleroi v Oostende
Eupen v Club Brugge
Kortrijk v Waasland-Beveren
Lokeren v Anderlecht
Mechelen v Genk
Mouscron v Sint-Truiden
Standard Liege v Antwerp
Zulte Waregem v Gent

DECEMBER 9
Anderlecht v Charleroi
Antwerp v Mouscron
Club Brugge v Lokeren
Genk v Eupen
Gent v Kortrijk
Oostende v Mechelen
Sint-Truiden v Zulte Waregem
Waasland-Beveren v Standard Liege

DECEMBER 16
Charleroi v Genk
Club Brugge v Anderlecht
Eupen v Sint-Truiden
Kortrijk v Mechelen
Lokeren v Waasland-Beveren
Mouscron v Oostende
Standard Liege v Gent
Zulte Waregem v Antwerp

DECEMBER 21
Anderlecht v Eupen
Antwerp v Lokeren
Genk v Kortrijk
Gent v Charleroi
Mechelen v Club Brugge
Mouscron v Zulte Waregem
Standard Liege v Sint-Truiden
Waasland-Beveren v Oostende

DECEMBER 26
Anderlecht v Gent
Club Brugge v Mouscron
Eupen v Waasland-Beveren
Kortrijk v Standard Liege
Lokeren v Mechelen
Oostende v Genk
Sint-Truiden v Antwerp
Zulte Waregem v Charleroi

JANUARY 20
Antwerp v Club Brugge
Charleroi v Mouscron
Genk v Anderlecht
Gent v Lokeren
Mechelen v Zulte Waregem
Oostende v Kortrijk
Standard Liege v Eupen
Waasland-Beveren v Sint-Truiden

JANUARY 24
Anderlecht v Waasland-Beveren
Antwerp v Gent
Club Brugge v Oostende
Eupen v Charleroi
Lokeren v Genk
Mouscron v Kortrijk
Sint-Truiden v Mechelen
Zulte Waregem v Standard Liege

JANUARY 27
Charleroi v Antwerp
Genk v Sint-Truiden
Gent v Club Brugge
Kortrijk v Eupen
Mechelen v Mouscron
Oostende v Lokeren
Standard Liege v Anderlecht
Waasland-Beveren v Zulte Waregem

FEBRUARY 3
Anderlecht v Mechelen
Antwerp v Waasland-Beveren
Club Brugge v Charleroi
Eupen v Gent
Lokeren v Standard Liege
Mouscron v Genk
Sint-Truiden v Kortrijk
Zulte Waregem v Oostende

Oct 14...Andy King (no10) and Leicester City host West Bromwich Albion

FEBRUARY 10
Charleroi v Lokeren
Genk v Zulte Waregem
Gent v Sint-Truiden
Kortrijk v Antwerp
Mechelen v Eupen
Oostende v Anderlecht
Standard Liege v Mouscron
Waasland-Beveren v Club Brugge

FEBRUARY 17
Antwerp v Oostende
Charleroi v Standard Liege
Club Brugge v Genk
Gent v Mechelen
Lokeren v Kortrijk
Mouscron v Waasland-Beveren
Sint-Truiden v Anderlecht
Zulte Waregem v Eupen

FEBRUARY 24
Anderlecht v Mouscron
Eupen v Lokeren
Genk v Antwerp
Kortrijk v Zulte Waregem
Mechelen v Charleroi
Oostende v Sint-Truiden
Standard Liege v Club Brugge
Waasland-Beveren v Gent

MARCH 3
Antwerp v Eupen
Charleroi v Sint-Truiden
Club Brugge v Kortrijk
Gent v Oostende
Mouscron v Lokeren
Standard Liege v Mechelen
Waasland-Beveren v Genk
Zulte Waregem v Anderlecht

MARCH 10
Anderlecht v Antwerp
Eupen v Mouscron
Genk v Gent
Kortrijk v Charleroi
Lokeren v Zulte Waregem
Mechelen v Waasland-Beveren
Oostende v Standard Liege
Sint-Truiden v Club Brugge

(The league then splits into Championship and Europa League play-off leagues)

ENGLAND: PREMIER LEAGUE

AUGUST 11
Arsenal v Leicester City

AUGUST 12
Brighton v Manchester City
Chelsea v Burnley
Crystal Palace v Huddersfield Town
Everton v Stoke City
Southampton v Swansea City
Watford v Liverpool
West Brom v Bournemouth

AUGUST 13
Manchester United v West Ham United
Newcastle United v Tottenham Hotspur

AUGUST 19
Bournemouth v Watford
Burnley v West Brom
Leicester City v Brighton
Liverpool v Crystal Palace
Southampton v West Ham United
Stoke City v Arsenal
Swansea City v Manchester United

AUGUST 20
Huddersfield Town v Newcastle United
Tottenham Hotspur v Chelsea

AUGUST 21
Manchester City v Everton

AUGUST 26
Bournemouth v Manchester City
Chelsea v Everton
Crystal Palace v Swansea City
Huddersfield Town v Southampton
Manchester United v Leicester City
Newcastle United v West Ham United
Tottenham Hotspur v Burnley
Watford v Brighton

AUGUST 27
Liverpool v Arsenal
West Brom v Stoke City

SEPTEMBER 9
Arsenal v Bournemouth
Brighton v West Brom
Everton v Tottenham Hotspur
Leicester City v Chelsea
Manchester City v Liverpool
Southampton v Watford
Stoke City v Manchester United

SEPTEMBER 10
Burnley v Crystal Palace
Swansea City v Newcastle United

SEPTEMBER 11
West Ham United v Huddersfield Town

SEPTEMBER 16
Bournemouth v Brighton
Crystal Palace v Southampton
Huddersfield Town v Leicester City
Liverpool v Burnley
Newcastle United v Stoke City
Tottenham Hotspur v Swansea City
Watford v Manchester City
West Brom v West Ham United

SEPTEMBER 17
Chelsea v Arsenal
Manchester United v Everton

SEPTEMBER 23
Burnley v Huddersfield Town
Everton v Bournemouth
Leicester City v Liverpool
Manchester City v Crystal Palace
Southampton v Manchester United
Stoke City v Chelsea
Swansea City v Watford
West Ham United v Tottenham Hotspur

SEPTEMBER 24
Brighton v Newcastle United

SEPTEMBER 25
Arsenal v West Brom

SEPTEMBER 30
Bournemouth v Leicester City
Chelsea v Manchester City
Huddersfield Town v Tottenham Hotspur
Manchester United v Crystal Palace
Stoke City v Southampton
West Brom v Watford
West Ham United v Swansea City

OCTOBER 1
Arsenal v Brighton
Everton v Burnley
Newcastle United v Liverpool

OCTOBER 14
Brighton v Everton
Burnley v West Ham United
Crystal Palace v Chelsea
Leicester City v West Brom
Liverpool v Manchester United
Manchester City v Stoke City
Southampton v Newcastle United
Swansea City v Huddersfield Town
Tottenham Hotspur v Bournemouth
Watford v Arsenal

OCTOBER 21
Chelsea v Watford
Everton v Arsenal
Huddersfield Town v Manchester United
Manchester City v Burnley
Newcastle United v Crystal Palace
Southampton v West Brom
Stoke City v Bournemouth
Swansea City v Leicester City
Tottenham Hotspur v Liverpool
West Ham United v Brighton

OCTOBER 28
Arsenal v Swansea City
Bournemouth v Chelsea
Brighton v Southampton
Burnley v Newcastle United
Crystal Palace v West Ham United
Leicester City v Everton
Liverpool v Huddersfield Town
Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur
Watford v Stoke City
West Brom v Manchester City

NOVEMBER 4
Chelsea v Manchester United
Everton v Watford
Huddersfield Town v West Brom
Manchester City v Arsenal
Newcastle United v Bournemouth
Southampton v Burnley
Stoke City v Leicester City
Swansea City v Brighton
Tottenham Hotspur v Crystal Palace
West Ham United v Liverpool

NOVEMBER 18
Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur
Bournemouth v Huddersfield Town
Brighton v Stoke City
Burnley v Swansea City
Crystal Palace v Everton
Leicester City v Manchester City
Liverpool v Southampton
Manchester United v Newcastle United
Watford v West Ham United
West Brom v Chelsea

NOVEMBER 25
Burnley v Arsenal
Crystal Palace v Stoke City
Huddersfield Town v Manchester City
Liverpool v Chelsea
Manchester United v Brighton
Newcastle United v Watford
Southampton v Everton
Swansea City v Bournemouth
Tottenham Hotspur v West Brom
West Ham United v Leicester City

NOVEMBER 28
Arsenal v Huddersfield Town
Bournemouth v Burnley
Brighton v Crystal Palace
Leicester City v Tottenham Hotspur
Watford v Manchester United
West Brom v Newcastle United

NOVEMBER 29
Chelsea v Swansea City
Everton v West Ham United
Manchester City v Southampton
Stoke City v Liverpool
Bournemouth v Southampton

DECEMBER 2
Arsenal v Manchester United
Brighton v Liverpool
Chelsea v Newcastle United
Everton v Huddersfield Town
Leicester City v Burnley
Manchester City v West Ham United
Stoke City v Swansea City
Watford v Tottenham Hotspur
West Brom v Crystal Palace

DECEMBER 9
Burnley v Watford
Crystal Palace v Bournemouth
Huddersfield Town v Brighton
Liverpool v Everton
Manchester United v Manchester City
Newcastle United v Leicester City
Southampton v Arsenal
Swansea City v West Brom
Tottenham Hotspur v Stoke City
West Ham United v Chelsea

DECEMBER 12
Burnley v Stoke City
Crystal Palace v Watford
Huddersfield Town v Chelsea
Manchester United v Bournemouth
Swansea City v Manchester City
West Ham United v Arsenal

DECEMBER 13
Liverpool v West Brom
Newcastle United v Everton
Southampton v Leicester City
Tottenham Hotspur v Brighton

DECEMBER 16
Arsenal v Newcastle United
Bournemouth v Liverpool
Brighton v Burnley
Chelsea v Southampton
Everton v Swansea City
Leicester City v Crystal Palace
Manchester City v Tottenham Hotspur
Stoke City v West Ham United
Watford v Huddersfield Town
West Brom v Manchester United

DECEMBER 23
Arsenal v Liverpool
Brighton v Watford
Burnley v Tottenham Hotspur
Everton v Chelsea
Leicester City v Manchester United
Manchester City v Bournemouth
Southampton v Huddersfield Town
Stoke City v West Brom
Swansea City v Crystal Palace
West Ham United v Newcastle United

DECEMBER 26
Bournemouth v West Ham United
Chelsea v Brighton
Crystal Palace v Arsenal
Huddersfield Town v Stoke City
Liverpool v Swansea City
Manchester United v Burnley
Newcastle United v Manchester City
Tottenham Hotspur v Southampton
Watford v Leicester City
West Brom v Everton

DECEMBER 30
Bournemouth v Everton
Chelsea v Stoke City
Crystal Palace v Manchester City
Huddersfield Town v Burnley
Liverpool v Leicester City
Manchester United v Southampton
Newcastle United v Brighton
Tottenham Hotspur v West Ham United
Watford v Swansea City
West Brom v Arsenal

JANUARY 1
Arsenal v Chelsea
Brighton v Bournemouth
Burnley v Liverpool
Everton v Manchester United
Leicester City v Huddersfield Town
Manchester City v Watford

Southampton v Crystal Palace
Stoke City v Newcastle United
Swansea City v Tottenham Hotspur
West Ham United v West Brom

JANUARY 13
Bournemouth v Arsenal
Chelsea v Leicester City
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Huddersfield Town v West Ham United
Liverpool v Manchester City
Manchester United v Stoke City
Newcastle United v Swansea City
Tottenham Hotspur v Everton
Watford v Southampton
West Brom v Brighton

JANUARY 20
Arsenal v Crystal Palace
Brighton v Chelsea
Burnley v Manchester United
Everton v West Brom
Leicester City v Watford
Manchester City v Newcastle United
Southampton v Tottenham Hotspur
Stoke City v Huddersfield Town
Swansea City v Liverpool
West Ham United v Bournemouth

JANUARY 30
Huddersfield Town v Liverpool
Swansea City v Arsenal
West Ham United v Crystal Palace

JANUARY 31
Chelsea v Bournemouth
Everton v Leicester City
Manchester City v West Brom
Newcastle United v Burnley
Southampton v Brighton
Stoke City v Watford
Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester United

FEBRUARY 3
Arsenal v Everton
Bournemouth v Stoke City
Brighton v West Ham United
Burnley v Manchester City
Crystal Palace v Newcastle United
Leicester City v Swansea City
Liverpool v Tottenham Hotspur
Manchester United v Huddersfield Town
Watford v Chelsea
West Brom v Southampton

FEBRUARY 10
Chelsea v West Brom
Everton v Crystal Palace
Huddersfield Town v Bournemouth
Manchester City v Leicester City
Newcastle United v Manchester United
Southampton v Liverpool
Stoke City v Brighton
Swansea City v Burnley
Tottenham Hotspur v Arsenal
West Ham United v Watford

FEBRUARY 24
Arsenal v Manchester City
Bournemouth v Newcastle United
Brighton v Swansea City
Burnley v Southampton
Crystal Palace v Tottenham Hotspur
Leicester City v Stoke City
Liverpool v West Ham United
Manchester United v Chelsea
Watford v Everton
West Brom v Huddersfield Town

MARCH 3
Brighton v Arsenal
Burnley v Everton
Crystal Palace v Manchester United
Leicester City v Bournemouth
Liverpool v Newcastle United
Manchester City v Chelsea
Southampton v Stoke City
Swansea City v West Ham United
Tottenham Hotspur v Huddersfield Town
Watford v West Brom

MARCH 10
Arsenal v Watford
Bournemouth v Tottenham Hotspur
Chelsea v Crystal Palace
Everton v Brighton
Huddersfield Town v Swansea City
Manchester United v Liverpool
Newcastle United v Southampton
Stoke City v Manchester City
West Brom v Leicester City
West Ham United v Burnley

MARCH 17
Bournemouth v West Brom
Burnley v Chelsea
Huddersfield Town v Crystal Palace
Leicester City v Arsenal
Liverpool v Watford
Manchester City v Brighton
Stoke City v Everton
Swansea City v Southampton
Tottenham Hotspur v Newcastle United
West Ham United v Manchester United

MARCH 31
Arsenal v Stoke City
Brighton v Leicester City
Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspur
Crystal Palace v Liverpool
Everton v Manchester City
Manchester United v Swansea City
Newcastle United v Huddersfield Town
Watford v Bournemouth
West Brom v Burnley
West Ham United v Southampton

APRIL 7
Arsenal v Southampton
Bournemouth v Crystal Palace
Brighton v Huddersfield Town
Chelsea v West Ham United
Everton v Liverpool
Leicester City v Newcastle United
Manchester City v Manchester United
Stoke City v Tottenham Hotspur
Watford v Burnley
West Brom v Swansea City

APRIL 14
Burnley v Leicester City
Crystal Palace v Brighton
Huddersfield Town v Watford
Liverpool v Bournemouth
Manchester United v West Brom
Newcastle United v Arsenal
Southampton v Chelsea
Swansea City v Everton
Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester City
West Ham United v Stoke City

APRIL 21
Arsenal v West Ham United
Bournemouth v Manchester United
Brighton v Tottenham Hotspur
Chelsea v Huddersfield Town
Everton v Newcastle United
Leicester City v Southampton
Manchester City v Swansea City
Stoke City v Burnley
Watford v Crystal Palace
West Brom v Liverpool

APRIL 28
Burnley v Brighton
Crystal Palace v Leicester City
Huddersfield Town v Everton
Liverpool v Stoke City
Manchester United v Arsenal
Newcastle United v West Brom
Southampton v Bournemouth
Swansea City v Chelsea
Tottenham Hotspur v Watford
West Ham United v Manchester City

MAY 5
Arsenal v Burnley
Bournemouth v Swansea City
Brighton v Manchester United
Chelsea v Liverpool
Everton v Southampton
Leicester City v West Ham United
Manchester City v Huddersfield Town
Stoke City v Crystal Palace
Watford v Newcastle United
West Brom v Tottenham Hotspur

MAY 13
Burnley v Bournemouth
Crystal Palace v West Brom
Huddersfield Town v Arsenal
Liverpool v Brighton
Manchester United v Watford
Newcastle United v Chelsea
Southampton v Manchester City
Swansea City v Stoke City
Tottenham Hotspur v Leicester City
West Ham United v Everton

Apr 7...the Manchester derby

FRANCE: LIGUE 1

AUGUST 4
Monaco v Toulouse

AUGUST 5
Paris Saint-Germain v Amiens
Lyon v Strasbourg
Metz v Guingamp
Montpellier v Caen
Saint-Etienne v Nice
Troyes v Rennes

AUGUST 6
Lille v Nantes
Angers v Bordeaux
Marseille v Dijon

AUGUST 12
Amiens v Angers
Bordeaux v Metz
Caen v Saint-Etienne
Dijon v Monaco
Guingamp v Paris Saint-Germain
Nantes v Marseille
Nice v Troyes
Rennes v Lyon
Strasbourg v Lille
Toulouse v Montpellier

AUGUST 19
Lille v Caen
Lyon v Bordeaux
Marseille v Angers
Metz v Monaco
Montpellier v Strasbourg
Nice v Guingamp
Paris Saint-Germain v Toulouse
Rennes v Dijon
Saint-Etienne v Amiens
Troyes v Nantes

AUGUST 26
Amiens v Nice
Angers v Lille
Bordeaux v Troyes
Caen v Metz
Dijon v Montpellier
Guingamp v Strasbourg
Nantes v Lyon
Paris Saint-Germain v Saint-Etienne
Toulouse v Rennes

AUGUST 27
Monaco v Marseille

SEPTEMBER 9
Caen v Dijon
Lille v Bordeaux
Lyon v Guingamp
Marseille v Rennes
Metz v Paris Saint-Germain
Montpellier v Nantes
Nice v Monaco
Saint-Etienne v Angers
Strasbourg v Amiens
Troyes v Toulouse

SEPTEMBER 16
Amiens v Marseille
Angers v Metz
Dijon v Saint-Etienne
Guingamp v Lille
Monaco v Strasbourg
Nantes v Caen
Rennes v Nice
Toulouse v Bordeaux
Troyes v Montpellier

SEPTEMBER 17
Paris Saint-Germain v Lyon

SEPTEMBER 23
Bordeaux v Guingamp
Caen v Amiens
Lille v Monaco
Lyon v Dijon
Marseille v Toulouse
Metz v Troyes
Montpellier v Paris Saint-Germain
Nice v Angers
Saint-Etienne v Rennes
Strasbourg v Nantes

SEPTEMBER 30
Amiens v Lille
Angers v Lyon
Dijon v Strasbourg
Guingamp v Toulouse
Monaco v Montpellier
Nantes v Metz
Nice v Marseille
Paris Saint-Germain v Bordeaux
Rennes v Caen
Troyes v Saint-Etienne

OCTOBER 14
Bordeaux v Nantes
Caen v Angers
Dijon v Paris Saint-Germain
Guingamp v Rennes
Lille v Troyes
Lyon v Monaco
Montpellier v Nice
Saint-Etienne v Metz
Strasbourg v Marseille
Toulouse v Amiens

OCTOBER 21
Amiens v Bordeaux
Angers v Toulouse
Metz v Dijon
Monaco v Caen
Nantes v Guingamp
Nice v Strasbourg
Rennes v Lille
Saint-Etienne v Montpellier
Troyes v Lyon

OCTOBER 22
Marseille v Paris Saint-Germain

OCTOBER 28
Bordeaux v Monaco
Caen v Troyes
Dijon v Nantes
Guingamp v Amiens
Lille v Marseille
Lyon v Metz
Montpellier v Rennes
Paris Saint-Germain v Nice
Strasbourg v Angers
Toulouse v Saint-Etienne

NOVEMBER 4
Angers v Paris Saint-Germain
Marseille v Caen
Metz v Lille

Monaco v Guingamp
Montpellier v Amiens
Nantes v Toulouse
Nice v Dijon
Rennes v Bordeaux
Troyes v Strasbourg

NOVEMBER 5

Saint-Etienne v Lyon

NOVEMBER 18

Amiens v Monaco
Bordeaux v Marseille
Caen v Nice
Dijon v Troyes
Guingamp v Angers
Lille v Saint-Etienne
Lyon v Montpellier
Paris Saint-Germain v Nantes
Strasbourg v Rennes
Toulouse v Metz

NOVEMBER 25

Caen v Bordeaux
Dijon v Toulouse
Marseille v Guingamp
Metz v Amiens
Montpellier v Lille
Nice v Lyon
Rennes v Nantes
Saint-Etienne v Strasbourg
Troyes v Angers

NOVEMBER 26

Monaco v Paris Saint-Germain

WEDNESDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

Amiens v Dijon
Angers v Rennes
Bordeaux v Saint-Etienne
Guingamp v Montpellier
Lyon v Lille
Metz v Marseille
Nantes v Monaco
Paris Saint-Germain v Troyes
Strasbourg v Caen
Toulouse v Nice

DECEMBER 2

Caen v Lyon
Dijon v Bordeaux
Lille v Toulouse
Monaco v Angers
Montpellier v Marseille
Nice v Metz
Rennes v Amiens
Saint-Etienne v Nantes
Strasbourg v Paris Saint-Germain
Troyes v Guingamp

DECEMBER 9

Amiens v Lyon
Angers v Montpellier
Bordeaux v Strasbourg
Guingamp v Dijon
Marseille v Saint-Etienne
Metz v Rennes
Monaco v Troyes
Nantes v Nice
Paris Saint-Germain v Lille
Toulouse v Caen

DECEMBER 16

Caen v Guingamp
Dijon v Lille
Lyon v Marseille
Montpellier v Metz
Nantes v Angers
Nice v Bordeaux
Rennes v Paris Saint-Germain
Saint-Etienne v Monaco
Strasbourg v Toulouse
Troyes v Amiens

DECEMBER20

Amiens v Nantes
Angers v Dijon
Bordeaux v Montpellier
Guingamp v Saint-Etienne
Lille v Nice
Marseille v Troyes
Metz v Strasbourg
Monaco v Rennes
Paris Saint-Germain v Caen
Toulouse v Lyon

JANUARY 13

Caen v Lille
Dijon v Metz
Lyon v Angers
Montpellier v Monaco
Nantes v Paris Saint-Germain
Nice v Amiens
Rennes v Marseille
Saint-Etienne v Toulouse
Strasbourg v Guingamp
Troyes v Bordeaux

JANUARY 17

Amiens v Montpellier
Angers v Troyes
Bordeaux v Caen
Guingamp v Lyon
Lille v Rennes
Marseille v Strasbourg
Metz v Saint-Etienne
Monaco v Nice
Paris Saint-Germain v Dijon
Toulouse v Nantes

JANUARY 20

Amiens v Guingamp
Caen v Marseille
Lyon v Paris Saint-Germain
Monaco v Metz
Montpellier v Toulouse
Nantes v Bordeaux
Nice v Saint-Etienne
Rennes v Angers
Strasbourg v Dijon
Troyes v Lille

JANUARY 27

Angers v Amiens
Bordeaux v Lyon
Dijon v Rennes
Guingamp v Nantes

Jan 20...Montpellier versus Toulouse

Lille v Strasbourg
Metz v Nice
Paris Saint-Germain v Montpellier
Saint-Etienne v Caen
Toulouse v Troyes

JANUARY 28

Marseille v Monaco

SATURDAY 3RD FEBRUARY

Amiens v Saint-Etienne
Caen v Nantes
Lille v Paris Saint-Germain
Marseille v Metz
Montpellier v Angers
Nice v Toulouse
Rennes v Guingamp
Strasbourg v Bordeaux
Troyes v Dijon

FEBRUARY 4

Monaco v Lyon

FEBRUARY 10

Angers v Monaco
Bordeaux v Amiens
Dijon v Nice
Guingamp v Caen
Lyon v Rennes
Metz v Montpellier
Nantes v Lille
Saint-Etienne v Marseille
Strasbourg v Troyes
Toulouse v Paris Saint-Germain

FEBRUARY 17

Amiens v Toulouse
Angers v Saint-Etienne
Caen v Rennes
Lille v Lyon
Marseille v Bordeaux
Monaco v Dijon
Montpellier v Guingamp
Nice v Nantes
Paris Saint-Germain v Strasbourg
Troyes v Metz

FEBRUARY 24

Bordeaux v Nice
Dijon v Caen
Guingamp v Metz
Lille v Angers
Lyon v Saint-Etienne
Nantes v Amiens
Paris Saint-Germain v Marseille
Rennes v Troyes
Strasbourg v Montpellier
Toulouse v Monaco

MARCH 3

Amiens v Rennes
Angers v Guingamp
Caen v Strasbourg
Marseille v Nantes
Metz v Toulouse
Monaco v Bordeaux
Montpellier v Lyon
Nice v Lille
Saint-Etienne v Dijon
Troyes v Paris Saint-Germain

MARCH 10

Bordeaux v Angers
Dijon v Amiens
Guingamp v Nice
Lille v Montpellier
Lyon v Caen
Nantes v Troyes
Paris Saint-Germain v Metz
Rennes v Saint-Etienne
Strasbourg v Monaco
Toulouse v Marseille

MARCH 17

Amiens v Troyes
Angers v Caen
Bordeaux v Rennes
Marseille v Lyon
Metz v Nantes
Monaco v Lille
Montpellier v Dijon
Nice v Paris Saint-Germain
Saint-Etienne v Guingamp
Toulouse v Strasbourg

APRIL 1

Caen v Montpellier
Dijon v Marseille
Guingamp v Bordeaux
Lille v Amiens
Lyon v Toulouse
Nantes v Saint-Etienne
Paris Saint-Germain v Angers
Rennes v Monaco
Strasbourg v Metz
Troyes v Nice

APRIL 7

Amiens v Caen
Angers v Strasbourg
Bordeaux v Lille
Guingamp v Troyes
Marseille v Montpellier
Metz v Lyon
Monaco v Nantes
Nice v Rennes
Saint-Etienne v Paris Saint-Germain
Toulouse v Dijon

APRIL 14

Angers v Nice
Caen v Toulouse
Lille v Guingamp
Lyon v Amiens
Montpellier v Bordeaux
Nantes v Dijon
Rennes v Metz
Strasbourg v Saint-Etienne
Troyes v Marseille

APRIL 15

Paris Saint-Germain v Monaco

APRIL 21

Amiens v Strasbourg
Bordeaux v Paris Saint-Germain
Dijon v Lyon
Guingamp v Monaco
Marseille v Lille
Metz v Caen
Nantes v Rennes
Nice v Montpellier
Saint-Etienne v Troyes
Toulouse v Angers

APRIL 28

Angers v Marseille
Bordeaux v Dijon
Lille v Metz
Lyon v Nantes
Monaco v Amiens
Montpellier v Saint-Etienne
Paris Saint-Germain v Guingamp
Rennes v Toulouse
Strasbourg v Nice
Troyes v Caen

MAY 6

Amiens v Paris Saint-Germain
Caen v Monaco
Dijon v Guingamp
Lyon v Troyes
Marseille v Nice
Metz v Angers
Nantes v Montpellier
Rennes v Strasbourg
Saint-Etienne v Bordeaux
Toulouse v Lille

MAY 12

Amiens v Metz
Angers v Nantes
Bordeaux v Toulouse
Guingamp v Marseille
Lille v Dijon
Monaco v Saint-Etienne
Montpellier v Troyes
Nice v Caen
Paris Saint-Germain v Rennes
Strasbourg v Lyon

MAY 19

Caen v Paris Saint-Germain
Dijon v Angers
Lyon v Nice
Marseille v Amiens
Metz v Bordeaux
Nantes v Strasbourg
Rennes v Montpellier
Saint-Etienne v Lille
Toulouse v Guingamp
Troyes v Monaco

GERMANY: BUNDESLIGA

AUGUST 18

Bayern Munich v Bayer Leverkusen

AUGUST 19

Borussia M'gladbach v Cologne
Freiburg v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hamburg v Augsburg
Hertha Berlin v Stuttgart
Hoffenheim v Werder Bremen
Mainz v Hanover
Schalke v RB Leipzig
Wolfsburg v Borussia Dortmund

AUGUST 26

Augsburg v Borussia M'gladbach
Bayer Leverkusen v Hoffenheim
Borussia Dortmund v Hertha Berlin
Cologne v Hamburg
Eintracht Frankfurt v Wolfsburg
Hanover v Schalke
RB Leipzig v Freiburg

Stuttgart v Mainz
Werder Bremen v Bayern Munich

SEPTEMBER 9
Augsburg v Cologne
Borussia M'gladbach v Eintracht Frankfurt
Freiburg v Borussia Dortmund
Hamburg v RB Leipzig
Hertha Berlin v Werder Bremen
Hoffenheim v Bayern Munich
Mainz v Bayer Leverkusen
Schalke v Stuttgart
Wolfsburg v Hanover

SEPTEMBER 16
Bayer Leverkusen v Freiburg
Bayern Munich v Mainz
Borussia Dortmund v Cologne
Eintracht Frankfurt v Augsburg
Hanover v Hamburg
Hoffenheim v Hertha Berlin
RB Leipzig v Borussia M'gladbach
Stuttgart v Wolfsburg
Werder Bremen v Schalke

SEPTEMBER 19
Augsburg v RB Leipzig
Borussia M'gladbach v Stuttgart
Cologne v Eintracht Frankfurt
Freiburg v Hanover
Hamburg v Borussia Dortmund
Hertha Berlin v Bayer Leverkusen
Mainz v Hoffenheim
Schalke v Bayern Munich
Wolfsburg v Werder Bremen

SEPTEMBER 23
Bayer Leverkusen v Hamburg
Bayern Munich v Wolfsburg
Borussia Dortmund v Borussia M'gladbach
Hanover v Cologne
Hoffenheim v Schalke
Mainz v Hertha Berlin
RB Leipzig v Eintracht Frankfurt
Stuttgart v Augsburg
Werder Bremen v Freiburg

Aug 26... Bremen v Bayern

SEPTEMBER 30
Augsburg v Borussia Dortmund
Borussia M'gladbach v Hanover
Cologne v RB Leipzig
Eintracht Frankfurt v Stuttgart
Freiburg v Hoffenheim
Hamburg v Werder Bremen
Hertha Berlin v Bayern Munich
Schalke v Bayer Leverkusen
Wolfsburg v Mainz

OCTOBER 14
Bayer Leverkusen v Wolfsburg
Bayern Munich v Freiburg
Borussia Dortmund v RB Leipzig
Hanover v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hertha Berlin v Schalke
Hoffenheim v Augsburg
Mainz v Hamburg
Stuttgart v Cologne
Werder Bremen v Borussia M'gladbach

OCTOBER 21
Augsburg v Hanover
Borussia M'gladbach v Bayer Leverkusen
Cologne v Werder Bremen
Eintracht Frankfurt v Borussia Dortmund
Freiburg v Hertha Berlin
Hamburg v Bayern Munich
RB Leipzig v Stuttgart
Schalke v Mainz
Wolfsburg v Hoffenheim

OCTOBER 28
Bayer Leverkusen v Cologne
Bayern Munich v RB Leipzig
Hanover v Borussia Dortmund
Hertha Berlin v Hamburg
Hoffenheim v Borussia M'gladbach
Mainz v Eintracht Frankfurt
Schalke v Wolfsburg
Stuttgart v Freiburg
Werder Bremen v Augsburg

NOVEMBER 4
Augsburg v Bayer Leverkusen
Borussia Dortmund v Bayern Munich
Borussia M'gladbach v Mainz
Cologne v Hoffenheim
Eintracht Frankfurt v Werder Bremen
Hamburg v Stuttgart
RB Leipzig v Hanover
Freiburg v Schalke
Wolfsburg v Hertha Berlin

NOVEMBER 18
Bayer Leverkusen v RB Leipzig
Bayern Munich v Augsburg
Hertha Berlin v Borussia M'gladbach
Hoffenheim v Eintracht Frankfurt
Mainz v Cologne
Schalke v Hamburg
Stuttgart v Borussia Dortmund
Werder Bremen v Hanover
Wolfsburg v Freiburg

NOVEMBER 25
Augsburg v Wolfsburg
Borussia Dortmund v Schalke
Borussia M'gladbach v Bayern Munich
Cologne v Hertha Berlin
Eintracht Frankfurt v Bayer Leverkusen
Freiburg v Mainz
Hamburg v Hoffenheim
Hanover v Stuttgart
RB Leipzig v Werder Bremen

DECEMBER 2
Bayer Leverkusen v Borussia Dortmund
Bayern Munich v Hanover
Freiburg v Hamburg
Hertha Berlin v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hoffenheim v RB Leipzig
Mainz v Augsburg
Schalke v Cologne
Werder Bremen v Stuttgart
Wolfsburg v Borussia M'gladbach

DECEMBER 9
Augsburg v Hertha Berlin
Borussia Dortmund v Werder Bremen
Borussia M'gladbach v Schalke
Cologne v Freiburg
Eintracht Frankfurt v Bayern Munich
Hamburg v Wolfsburg
Hanover v Hoffenheim
RB Leipzig v Mainz
Stuttgart v Bayer Leverkusen

DECEMBER 12
Bayer Leverkusen v Werder Bremen
Bayern Munich v Cologne
Freiburg v Borussia M'gladbach
Hamburg v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hertha Berlin v Hanover
Hoffenheim v Stuttgart
Mainz v Borussia Dortmund
Schalke v Augsburg
Wolfsburg v RB Leipzig

DECEMBER 16
Augsburg v Freiburg
Borussia Dortmund v Hoffenheim
Borussia M'gladbach v Hamburg
Cologne v Wolfsburg
Eintracht Frankfurt v Schalke
Hanover v Bayer Leverkusen
RB Leipzig v Hertha Berlin
Stuttgart v Bayern Munich
Werder Bremen v Mainz

JANUARY 13
Augsburg v Hamburg
Bayer Leverkusen v Bayern Munich
Borussia Dortmund v Wolfsburg
Cologne v Borussia M'gladbach
Eintracht Frankfurt v Freiburg
Hanover v Mainz
RB Leipzig v Schalke
Stuttgart v Hertha Berlin
Werder Bremen v Hoffenheim

JANUARY 20
Bayern Munich v Werder Bremen
Borussia M'gladbach v Augsburg
Freiburg v RB Leipzig
Hamburg v Cologne
Hertha Berlin v Borussia Dortmund
Hoffenheim v Bayer Leverkusen
Mainz v Stuttgart
Schalke v Hanover
Wolfsburg v Eintracht Frankfurt

JANUARY 27
Bayer Leverkusen v Mainz
Bayern Munich v Hoffenheim
Borussia Dortmund v Freiburg
Cologne v Augsburg
Eintracht Frankfurt v Borussia M'gladbach
Hanover v Wolfsburg
RB Leipzig v Hamburg
Stuttgart v Schalke
Werder Bremen v Hertha Berlin

FEBRUARY 3
Augsburg v Eintracht Frankfurt
Borussia M'gladbach v RB Leipzig
Cologne v Borussia Dortmund
Freiburg v Bayer Leverkusen
Hamburg v Hanover
Hertha Berlin v Hoffenheim
Mainz v Bayern Munich
Schalke v Werder Bremen
Wolfsburg v Stuttgart

FEBRUARY 10
Bayer Leverkusen v Hertha Berlin
Bayern Munich v Schalke
Borussia Dortmund v Hamburg
Eintracht Frankfurt v Cologne
Hanover v Freiburg
Hoffenheim v Mainz
RB Leipzig v Augsburg
Stuttgart v Borussia M'gladbach
Werder Bremen v Wolfsburg

FEBRUARY 17
Augsburg v Stuttgart
Borussia M'gladbach v Bor Dortmund
Cologne v Hanover
Eintracht Frankfurt v RB Leipzig
Freiburg v Werder Bremen
Hamburg v Bayer Leverkusen
Hertha Berlin v Mainz
Schalke v Hoffenheim
Wolfsburg v Bayern Munich

FEBRUARY 24
Bayer Leverkusen v Schalke
Bayern Munich v Hertha Berlin
Borussia Dortmund v Augsburg
Hanover v Borussia M'gladbach
Hoffenheim v Freiburg
Mainz v Wolfsburg
RB Leipzig v Cologne
Stuttgart v Eintracht Frankfurt
Werder Bremen v Hamburg

MARCH 3
Augsburg v Hoffenheim
Borussia M'gladbach v Werder Bremen
Cologne v Stuttgart
Eintracht Frankfurt v Hanover
Freiburg v Bayern Munich
Hamburg v Mainz
RB Leipzig v Borussia Dortmund
Schalke v Hertha Berlin
Wolfsburg v Bayer Leverkusen

MARCH 10
Bayer Leverkusen v Borussia M'gladbach
Bayern Munich v Hamburg
Borussia Dortmund v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hanover v Augsburg
Hertha Berlin v Freiburg
Hoffenheim v Wolfsburg
Mainz v Schalke
Stuttgart v RB Leipzig
Werder Bremen v Cologne

MARCH 17
Augsburg v Werder Bremen
Borussia Dortmund v Hanover
Borussia M'gladbach v Hoffenheim
Cologne v Bayer Leverkusen
Eintracht Frankfurt v Mainz
Freiburg v Stuttgart
Hamburg v Hertha Berlin
RB Leipzig v Bayern Munich
Wolfsburg v Schalke

MARCH 31
Bayer Leverkusen v Augsburg
Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund
Hanover v RB Leipzig
Hertha Berlin v Wolfsburg
Hoffenheim v Cologne
Mainz v Borussia M'gladbach
Schalke v Freiburg
Stuttgart v Hamburg
Werder Bremen v Eintracht Frankfurt

APRIL 7
Augsburg v Bayern Munich
Borussia Dortmund v Stuttgart
Cologne v Mainz
Eintracht Frankfurt v Hoffenheim
Freiburg v Wolfsburg
Hamburg v Schalke
Hanover v Werder Bremen
Borussia M'gladbach v Hertha Berlin
RB Leipzig v Bayer Leverkusen

APRIL 14
Bayer Leverkusen v Eintracht Frankfurt
Bayern Munich v Borussia M'gladbach
Hertha Berlin v Cologne
Hoffenheim v Hamburg
Mainz v Freiburg
Schalke v Borussia Dortmund
Stuttgart v Hanover
Werder Bremen v RB Leipzig
Wolfsburg v Augsburg

APRIL 21
Augsburg v Mainz
Borussia Dortmund v Bayer Leverkusen
Borussia M'gladbach v Wolfsburg
Cologne v Schalke
Eintracht Frankfurt v Hertha Berlin
Hamburg v Freiburg
Hanover v Bayern Munich
RB Leipzig v Hoffenheim
Stuttgart v Werder Bremen

APRIL 28
Bayer Leverkusen v Stuttgart
Bayern Munich v Eintracht Frankfurt
Freiburg v Cologne
Hertha Berlin v Augsburg
Hoffenheim v Hanover
Mainz v RB Leipzig
Schalke v Borussia M'gladbach
Werder Bremen v Borussia Dortmund
Wolfsburg v Hamburg

MAY 5
Augsburg v Schalke
Borussia Dortmund v Mainz
Borussia M'gladbach v Freiburg
Cologne v Bayern Munich
Eintracht Frankfurt v Hamburg
Hanover v Hertha Berlin
RB Leipzig v Wolfsburg
Stuttgart v Hoffenheim
Werder Bremen v Bayer Leverkusen

MAY 12
Bayer Leverkusen v Hanover
Bayern Munich v Stuttgart
Freiburg v Augsburg
Hamburg v Borussia M'gladbach
Hertha Berlin v RB Leipzig
Hoffenheim v Borussia Dortmund
Mainz v Werder Bremen
Schalke v Eintracht Frankfurt
Wolfsburg v Cologne

HOLLAND: EREDIVISIE

AUGUST 11
Den Haag v Utrecht

AUGUST 12
Heracles v Ajax
PSV v AZ
Vitesse v NAC Breda
VVV Venlo v Sparta Rotterdam

AUGUST 13
Feyenoord v Twente
Groningen v Heerenveen
PEC Zwolle v Roda
Willem II v Excelsior

AUGUST 18
Roda v Vitesse

AUGUST 19
AZ v Den Haag
Ajax v Groningen
Heerenveen v Heracles
Twente v VVV Venlo

AUGUST 20
Excelsior v Feyenoord
NAC Breda v PSV
Sparta Rotterdam v PEC Zwolle
Utrecht v Willem II

FRIDAY 25TH AUGUST
NAC Breda v Sparta Rotterdam

AUGUST 26
Den Haag v Heerenveen
Heracles v Excelsior
PEC Zwolle v Twente
Vitesse v AZ

AUGUST 27
Feyenoord v Willem II
Groningen v Utrecht
PSV v Roda
VVV Venlo v Ajax

SEPTEMBER 9
Ajax v PEC Zwolle
Excelsior v Vitesse
Heracles v Feyenoord
Willem II v Den Haag

SEPTEMBER 10
AZ v NAC Breda
Groningen v VVV Venlo
Heerenveen v PSV
Sparta Rotterdam v Twente
Utrecht v Roda

SEPTEMBER 15
Sparta Rotterdam v AZ

SEPTEMBER 16
Excelsior v Heerenveen
NAC Breda v Groningen
PEC Zwolle v Heracles
Roda v Willem II

SEPTEMBER 17
Den Haag v Ajax
PSV v Feyenoord
Twente v Utrecht
Vitesse v VVV Venlo

SEPTEMBER 23
Ajax v Vitesse
Den Haag v Sparta Rotterdam
Feyenoord v NAC Breda
Willem II v Heerenveen

SEPTEMBER 24
AZ v Excelsior
Groningen v Twente
Heracles v Roda
Utrecht v PSV
VVV Venlo v PEC Zwolle

SEPTEMBER 29
Twente v Heracles

SEPTEMBER 30
Excelsior v VVV Venlo
NAC Breda v Den Haag
PEC Zwolle v Groningen
Sparta Rotterdam v Roda

OCTOBER 1
AZ v Feyenoord
Heerenveen v Ajax
PSV v Willem II
Vitesse v Utrecht

OCTOBER 14
Ajax v Sparta Rotterdam
Feyenoord v PEC Zwolle
Roda v NAC Breda
Utrecht v Heerenveen

OCTOBER 15
Den Haag v Excelsior
Groningen v AZ
Heracles v Vitesse
VVV Venlo v PSV
Willem II v Twente

OCTOBER 20
Groningen v Willem II

OCTOBER 21
Excelsior v Sparta Rotterdam
NAC Breda v PEC Zwolle
Twente v Roda
VVV Venlo v Den Haag

OCTOBER 22
AZ v Utrecht
Feyenoord v Ajax
Heerenveen v Vitesse
PSV v Heracles

OCTOBER 27
Twente v Excelsior

OCTOBER 28
Heracles v VVV Venlo
PEC Zwolle v Den Haag
Roda v Feyenoord
Willem II v Ajax

OCTOBER 29
Heerenveen v AZ
Sparta Rotterdam v Groningen
Utrecht v NAC Breda
Vitesse v PSV

NOVEMBER 3
Sparta Rotterdam v Heerenveen

NOVEMBER 4
AZ v Willem II
Excelsior v Roda
Heracles v Groningen
VVV Venlo v NAC Breda

NOVEMBER 5
Ajax v Utrecht
Den Haag v Feyenoord
PSV v Twente
Vitesse v PEC Zwolle

NOVEMBER 18
Feyenoord v VVV Venlo
NAC Breda v Ajax
Twente v Heerenveen
Willem II v Sparta Rotterdam

NOVEMBER 19
Den Haag v Heracles
Groningen v Vitesse
PEC Zwolle v PSV
Roda v AZ
Utrecht v Excelsior

NOVEMBER 24
AZ v Twente

NOVEMBER 25
Groningen v Feyenoord
Heerenveen v PEC Zwolle
Heracles v NAC Breda
VVV Venlo v Willem II

NOVEMBER 26
Ajax v Roda
Excelsior v PSV
Sparta Rotterdam v Utrecht
Vitesse v Den Haag

DECEMBER 1
PEC Zwolle v Utrecht

DECEMBER 2
Den Haag v Groningen
Feyenoord v Vitesse
Twente v Ajax
Willem II v Heracles

DECEMBER 3
NAC Breda v Excelsior
PSV v Sparta Rotterdam
Roda v Heerenveen
VVV Venlo v AZ

DECEMBER 8
Willem II v NAC Breda

DECEMBER 9
AZ v Heracles
Excelsior v PEC Zwolle
Heerenveen v VVV Venlo
Twente v Den Haag

DECEMBER 10
Ajax v PSV
Roda v Groningen
Sparta Rotterdam v Vitesse
Utrecht v Feyenoord

DECEMBER 12
NAC Breda v Twente
PEC Zwolle v AZ

DECEMBER 13
Den Haag v Roda
Feyenoord v Heerenveen
Groningen v PSV
Vitesse v Willem II
VVV Venlo v Utrecht

DECEMBER 14
Ajax v Excelsior
Heracles v Sparta Rotterdam

DECEMBER 16
Heerenveen v NAC Breda
PSV v Den Haag
Roda v VVV Venlo
Twente v Vitesse
Willem II v PEC Zwolle

DECEMBER 17
AZ v Ajax
Excelsior v Groningen
Sparta Rotterdam v Feyenoord
Utrecht v Heracles

DECEMBER 22
Den Haag v PEC Zwolle

DECEMBER 23
AZ v Heerenveen
Excelsior v Twente
PSV v Vitesse
VVV Venlo v Heracles

DECEMBER 24
Ajax v Willem II
Feyenoord v Roda
Groningen v Sparta Rotterdam
NAC Breda v Utrecht

JANUARY 19
Utrecht v AZ

JANUARY 20
Den Haag v VVV Venlo
PEC Zwolle v NAC Breda
Roda v Twente
Vitesse v Heerenveen

JANUARY 21
Ajax v Feyenoord
Heracles v PSV
Sparta Rotterdam v Excelsior
Willem II v Groningen

JANUARY 26
Heerenveen v Sparta Rotterdam

JANUARY 27
Groningen v Heracles
NAC Breda v VVV Venlo
PEC Zwolle v Vitesse
Twente v PSV

JANUARY 28
Feyenoord v Den Haag
Roda v Excelsior
Utrecht v Ajax
Willem II v AZ

FEBRUARY 2
Vitesse v Groningen

FEBRUARY 3
AZ v Roda
Heerenveen v Twente
Heracles v Den Haag
PSV v PEC Zwolle

FEBRUARY 4
Ajax v NAC Breda
Excelsior v Utrecht
Sparta Rotterdam v Willem II
VVV Venlo v Feyenoord

FEBRUARY 6
PEC Zwolle v Heerenveen
Twente v AZ

FEBRUARY 7
NAC Breda v Heracles
PSV v Excelsior
Roda v Ajax
Utrecht v Sparta Rotterdam
Willem II v VVV Venlo

FEBRUARY 8
Den Haag v Vitesse
Feyenoord v Groningen

FEBRUARY 10
AZ v VVV Venlo
Heerenveen v Roda
Heracles v Willem II
Sparta Rotterdam v PSV
Utrecht v PEC Zwolle

FEBRUARY 11
Ajax v Twente
Excelsior v NAC Breda
Groningen v Den Haag
Vitesse v Feyenoord

FEBRUARY 16
VVV Venlo v Groningen

FEBRUARY 17
Den Haag v Willem II
NAC Breda v AZ
PSV v Heerenveen
Vitesse v Excelsior

FEBRUARY 18
Feyenoord v Heracles
PEC Zwolle v Ajax
Roda v Utrecht
Twente v Sparta Rotterdam

FEBRUARY 23
Groningen v NAC Breda

FEBRUARY 24
AZ v Sparta Rotterdam
Heerenveen v Excelsior
Heracles v PEC Zwolle
VVV Venlo v Vitesse

FEBRUARY 25
Ajax v Den Haag
Feyenoord v PSV
Utrecht v Twente
Willem II v Roda

MARCH 2
Heerenveen v Willem II

MARCH 3
Excelsior v AZ
NAC Breda v Feyenoord
PSV v Utrecht
Roda v Heracles

MARCH 4
PEC Zwolle v VVV Venlo
Sparta Rotterdam v Den Haag
Twente v Groningen
Vitesse v Ajax

MARCH 9
Heracles v Twente

MARCH 10
Den Haag v NAC Breda
Roda v Sparta Rotterdam
VVV Venlo v Excelsior
Willem II v PSV

MARCH 11
Ajax v Heerenveen
Feyenoord v AZ
Groningen v PEC Zwolle
Utrecht v Vitesse

MARCH 16
Excelsior v Den Haag

MARCH 17
Heerenveen v Utrecht
PSV v VVV Venlo
Twente v Willem II
Vitesse v Heracles

MARCH 18
AZ v Groningen
NAC Breda v Roda
PEC Zwolle v Feyenoord
Sparta Rotterdam v Ajax

MARCH 31
Den Haag v AZ
PEC Zwolle v Sparta Rotterdam
PSV v NAC Breda
Vitesse v Roda
Willem II v Utrecht

APRIL 1
Feyenoord v Excelsior
Groningen v Ajax
Heracles v Heerenveen
VVV Venlo v Twente

APRIL 6
Excelsior v Willem II

APRIL 7
AZ v PSV
NAC Breda v Vitesse
Roda v PEC Zwolle
Sparta Rotterdam v VVV Venlo

APRIL 8
Ajax v Heracles
Heerenveen v Groningen
Twente v Feyenoord
Utrecht v Den Haag

APRIL 13
Heracles v AZ

APRIL 14
Den Haag v Twente
PEC Zwolle v Excelsior
Vitesse v Sparta Rotterdam
VVV Venlo v Heerenveen

APRIL 15
Feyenoord v Utrecht
Groningen v Roda
NAC Breda v Willem II
PSV v Ajax

APRIL 17
Heerenveen v Den Haag
Twente v PEC Zwolle

APRIL 18
Ajax v VVV Venlo
AZ v Vitesse
Excelsior v Heracles
Roda v PSV
Sparta Rotterdam v NAC Breda

APRIL 19
Utrecht v Groningen
Willem II v Feyenoord

APRIL 29
Ajax v AZ
Den Haag v PSV
Feyenoord v Sparta Rotterdam
Groningen v Excelsior
Heracles v Utrecht
NAC Breda v Heerenveen
PEC Zwolle v Willem II
Vitesse v Twente
VVV Venlo v Roda

MAY 6
AZ v PEC Zwolle
Excelsior v Ajax
Heerenveen v Feyenoord
PSV v Groningen
Roda v Den Haag
Sparta Rotterdam v Heracles
Twente v NAC Breda
Utrecht v VVV Venlo
Willem II v Vitesse

ITALY: SERIE A

AUGUST 20
Atalanta v Roma
Bologna v Torino
Crotone v Milan
Internazionale v Fiorentina
Juventus v Cagliari
Lazio v SPAL
Sampdoria v Benevento
Sassuolo v Genoa
Udinese v Chievo
Verona v Napoli

AUGUST 27
Benevento v Bologna
Chievo v Lazio
Crotone v Verona
Fiorentina v Sampdoria
Genoa v Juventus
Milan v Cagliari
Napoli v Atalanta
Roma v Internazionale
SPAL v Udinese
Torino v Sassuolo

SEPTEMBER 10
Atalanta v Sassuolo
Benevento v Torino
Bologna v Napoli
Cagliari v Crotone
Internazionale v SPAL
Juventus v Cheivo
Lazio v Milan
Sampdoria v Roma
Udinese v Genoa
Verona v Fiorentina

SEPTEMBER17
Chievo v Atalanta
Crotone v Internazionale
Fiorentina v Bologna
Genoa v Lazio
Milan v Udinese
Napoli v Benevento
Roma v Verona
Sassuolo v Juventus
SPAL v Cagliari
Torino v Sampdoria

SEPTEMBER 20
Atalanta v Crotone
Benevento v Roma
Bologna v Internazionale
Cagliari v Sassuolo
Genoa v Chievo
Juventus v Fiorentina
Lazio v Napoli
Milan v SPAL
Udinese v Torino
Verona v Sampdoria

Aug 20...Lazio open their campaign against SPAL

OCTOBER 24
Cagliari v Chievo
Crotone v Benevento
Fiorentina v Atalanta
Internazionale v Genoa
Juventus v Torino
Roma v Udinese
Sampdoria v Milan
Sassuolo v Bologna
SPAL v Napoli
Verona v Lazio

OCTOBER 1
Atalanta v Juventus
Benevento v Internazionale
Chievo v Fiorentina
Genoa v Bologna
Lazio v Sassuolo
Milan v Roma
Napoli v Cagliari
SPAL v Crotone
Torino v Verona
Udinese v Sampdoria

OCTOBER 15
Bologna v SPAL
Cagliari v Genoa
Crotone v Torino
Fiorentina v Udinese
Internazionale v Milan
Juventus v Lazio
Roma v Napoli
Sampdoria v Atalanta
Sassuolo v Chievo
Verona v Benevento

OCTOBER 22
Atalanta v Bologna
Benevento v Fiorentina
Chievo v Verona
Lazio v Cagliari
Milan v Genoa
Napoli v Internazionale
Sampdoria v Crotone
SPAL v Sassuolo
Torino v Roma
Udinese v Juventus

OCTOBER 25
Atalanta v Verona
Bologna v Lazio
Cagliari v Benevento
Chievo v Milan
Fiorentina v Torino
Genoa v Napoli
Internazionale v Sampdoria
Juventus v SPAL
Roma v Crotone
Sassuolo v Udinese

OCTOBER 29
Benevento v Lazio
Crotone v Fiorentina
Milan v Juventus
Napoli v Sassuolo
Roma v Bologna
Sampdoria v Chievo
SPAL v Genoa
Torino v Cagliari
Udinese v Atalanta
Verona v Internazionale

NOVEMBER 5
Atalanta v SPAL
Bologna v Crotone
Cagliari v Verona
Chievo v Napoli
Fiorentina v Roma
Genoa v Sampdoria
Internazionale v Torino
Juventus v Benevento
Lazio v Udinese
Sassuolo v Milan

NOVEMBER 19
Benevento v Sassuolo
Crotone v Genoa
Internazionale v Atalanta
Napoli v Milan
Roma v Lazio
Sampdoria v Juventus
SPAL v Fiorentina
Torino v Chievo
Udinese v Cagliari
Verona v Bologna

NOVEMBER 26
Atalanta v Benevento
Bologna v Sampdoria
Cagliari v Internazionale
Chievo v SPAL
Genoa v Roma
Juventus v Crotone
Lazio v Fiorentina
Milan v Torino
Sassuolo v Verona
Udinese v Napoli

DECEMBER 3
Benevento v Milan
Bologna v Cagliari
Crotone v Udinese
Fiorentina v Sassuolo
Internazionale v Chievo
Napoli v Juventus
Roma v SPAL
Sampdoria v Lazio
Torino v Atalanta
Verona v Genoa

DECEMBER 10
Cagliari v Sampdoria
Chievo v Roma
Genoa v Atalanta
Juventus v Internazionale
Lazio v Torino
Milan v Bologna
Napoli v Fiorentina
Sassuolo v Crotone
SPAL v Verona
Udinese v Benevento

DECEMBER 17
Atalanta v Lazio
Benevento v SPAL
Bologna v Juventus
Crotone v Chievo
Fiorentina v Genoa
Internazionale v Udinese
Roma v Cagliari
Sampdoria v Sassuolo
Torino v Napoli
Verona v Milan

DECEMBER 23
Cagliari v Fiorentina
Chievo v Bologna
Genoa v Benevento
Juventus v Roma
Lazio v Crotone
Milan v Atalanta
Napoli v Sampdoria
Sassuolo v Internazionale
SPAL v Torino
Udinese v Verona

DECEMBER 30
Atalanta v Cagliari
Benevento v Chievo
Bologna v Udinese
Crotone v Napoli
Fiorentina v Milan
Internazionale v Lazio
Roma v Sassuolo
Sampdoria v SPAL
Torino v Genoa
Verona v Juventus

JANUARY 6
Benevento v Sampdoria
Cagliari v Juventus
Chievo v Udinese
Fiorentina v Internazionale
Genoa v Sassuolo
Milan v Crotone
Napoli v Verona
Roma v Atalanta
SPAL v Lazio
Torino v Bologna

JANUARY 21
Atalanta v Napoli
Bologna v Benevento
Cagliari v Milan
Internazionale v Roma
Juventus v Genoa
Lazio v Chievo
Sampdoria v Fiorentina
Sassuolo v Torino
Udinese v SPAL
Verona v Crotone

JANUARY 28
Chievo v Juventus
Crotone v Cagliari
Fiorentina v Verona
Genoa v Udinese
Milan v Lazio
Napoli v Bologna
Roma v Sampdoria
Sassuolo v Atalanta
SPAL v Internazionale
Torino v Benevento

FEBRUARY 4
Atalanta v Chievo
Benevento v Napoli
Bologna v Fiorentina
Cagliari v SPAL
Internazionale v Crotone
Juventus v Sassuolo
Lazio v Genoa
Sampdoria v Torino
Udinese v Milan
Verona v Roma

FEBRUARY 11
Chievo v Genoa
Crotone v Atalanta
Fiorentina v Juventus
Internazionale v Bologna
Napoli v Lazio
Roma v Benevento
Sampdoria v Verona
Sassuolo v Cagliari
SPAL v Milan
Torino v Udinese

FEBRUARY 18
Atalanta v Fiorentina
Benevento v Crotone
Bologna v Sassuolo
Chievo v Cagliari
Genoa v Internazionale
Lazio v Verona
Milan v Sampdoria
Napoli v SPAL
Torino v Juventus
Udinese v Roma

FEBRUARY 25
Bologna v Genoa
Cagliari v Napoli
Crotone v SPAL
Fiorentina v Chievo
Internazionale v Benevento
Juventus v Atalanta
Roma v Milan
Sampdoria v Udinese
Sassuolo v Lazio
Verona v Torino

MARCH 4
Atalanta v Sampdoria
Benevento v Verona
Chievo v Sassuolo
Genoa v Cagliari
Lazio v Juventus
Milan v Internazionale
Napoli v Roma
SPAL v Bologna
Torino v Crotone
Udinese v Fiorentina

MARCH 11
Bologna v Atalanta
Cagliari v Lazio
Crotone v Sampdoria
Fiorentina v Benevento
Genoa v Milan
Internazionale v Napoli
Juventus v Udinese
Roma v Torino
Sassuolo v SPAL
Verona v Chievo

MARCH 18
Benevento v Cagliari
Crotone v Roma
Lazio v Bologna
Milan v Chievo
Napoli v Genoa
Sampdoria v Internazionale
SPAL v Juventus
Torino v Fiorentina
Udinese v Sassuolo
Verona v Atalanta

MARCH 31
Atalanta v Udinese
Bologna v Roma
Cagliari v Torino
Chievo v Sampdoria
Fiorentina v Crotone
Genoa v SPAL
Internazionale v Verona
Juventus v Milan
Lazio v Benevento
Sassuolo v Napoli

APRIL 8
Benevento v Juventus
Crotone v Bologna
Milan v Sassuolo
Napoli v Chievo
Roma v Fiorentina
Sampdoria v Genoa
SPAL v Atalanta
Torino v Internazionale
Udinese v Lazio
Verona v Cagliari

APRIL 15
Atalanta v Internazionale
Bologna v Verona
Cagliari v Udinese
Chievo v Torino
Fiorentina v SPAL
Genoa v Crotone
Juventus v Sampdoria
Lazio v Roma
Milan v Napoli
Sassuolo v Benevento

APRIL 18
Benevento v Atalanta
Crotone v Juventus
Fiorentina v Lazio
Internazionale v Cagliari
Napoli v Udinese
Roma v Genoa
Sampdoria v Bologna
SPAL v Chievo
Torino v Milan
Verona v Sassuolo

APRIL 22
Atalanta v Torino
Cagliari v Bologna
Chievo v Internazionale
Genoa v Verona
Juventus v Napoli
Lazio v Sampodoria
Milan v Benevento
Sassuolo v Fiorentina
SPAL v Roma
Udinese v Crotone

APRIL 29
Atalanta v Genoa
Benevento v Udinese
Bologna v Milan
Crotone v Sassuolo
Fiorentina v Napoli
Internazionale v Juventus
Roma v Chievo
Sampdoria v Cagliari
Torino v Lazio
Verona v SPAL

MAY 6
Cagliari v Roma
Chievo v Crotone
Genoa v Fiorentina
Juventus v Bologna
Lazio v Atalanta
Milan v Verona
Napoli v Torino
Sassuolo v Sampdoria
SPAL v Benevento
Udinese v Internazionale

MAY 13
Atalanta v Milan
Benevento v Genoa
Bologna v Chievo
Crotone v Lazio
Fiorentina v Cagliari
Internazionale v Sassuolo
Roma v Juventus
Sampdoria v Napoli
Torino v SPAL
Verona v Udinese

MAY 20
Cagliari v Atalanta
Chievo v Benevento
Genoa v Torino
Juventus v Verona
Lazio v Internazionale
Milan v Fiorentina
Napoli v Crotone
Sassuolo v Roma
SPAL v Sampdoria
Udinese v Bologna

PORTUGAL: PRIMEIRA LIGA

AUGUST 9
Aves v Sporting
Benfica v Braga
Feirense v Tondela
Maritimo v Pacos de Ferreira
Portimonense v Boavista
Porto v Estoril
Rio Ave v Belenenses
Vitoria Guimaraes v Chaves
Vitoria Setubal v Moreirense

AUGUST 13
Belenenses v Maritimo
Boavista v Rio Ave
Braga v Portimonense
Chaves v Benfica
Estoril v Vitoria Guimaraes
Moreirense v Feirense
Pacos de Ferreira v Aves
Sporting v Vitoria Setubal
Tondela v Porto

AUGUST 20
Aves v Braga
Benfica v Belenenses
Feirense v Pacos de Ferreira
Maritimo v Boavista
Porto v Moreirense
Rio Ave v Portimonense
Tondela v Estoril
Vitoria Guimaraes v Sporting
Vitoria Setubal v Chaves

AUGUST 27
Belenenses v Vitoria Setubal
Boavista v Aves
Braga v Porto
Chaves v Feirense
Moreirense v Tondela
Pacos de Ferreira v Vitoria Guimaraes
Portimonense v Maritimo
Rio Ave v Benfica
Sporting v Estoril

SEPTEMBER 10
Aves v Belenenses
Benfica v Portimonense
Estoril v Moreirense
Feirense v Sporting
Maritimo v Rio Ave
Porto v Chaves
Tondela v Pacos de Ferreira
Vitoria Guimaraes v Boavista
Vitoria Setubal v Braga

SEPTEMBER 17
Belenenses v Estoril
Boavista v Benfica
Braga v Vitoria Guimaraes
Chaves v Moreirense
Maritimo v Aves
Pacos de Ferreira v Vitoria Setubal
Portimonense v Feirense
Rio Ave v Porto
Sporting v Tondela

Sep 24...Porto v Portimonense

SEPTEMBER 24
Aves v Rio Ave
Benfica v Pacos de Ferreira
Estoril v Chaves
Feirense v Belenenses
Moreirense v Sporting
Porto v Portimonense
Tondela v Braga
Vitoria Guimaraes v Maritimo
Vitoria Setubal v Boavista

OCTOBER 1
Belenenses v Vitoria Guimaraes
Boavista v Feirense
Braga v Estoril
Chaves v Tondela
Maritimo v Benfica
Pacos de Ferreira v Moreirense
Portimonense v Aves
Rio Ave v Vitoria Setubal
Sporting v Porto

OCTOBER 22
Aves v Benfica
Estoril v Boavista
Feirense v Rio Ave
Moreirense v Braga
Porto v Pacos de Ferreira
Sporting v Chaves
Tondela v Belenenses
Vitoria Guimaraes v Portimonense
Vitoria Setubal v Maritimo

OCTOBER 29
Aves v Vitoria Guimaraes
Belenenses v Moreirense
Benfica v Feirense
Boavista v Porto
Braga v Chaves
Maritimo v Tondela
Pacos de Ferreira v Estoril
Portimonense v Vitoria Setubal
Rio Ave v Sporting

NOVEMBER 5
Chaves v Pacos de Ferreira
Estoril v Rio Ave
Feirense v Maritimo
Moreirense v Portimonense
Porto v Belenenses
Sporting v Braga
Tondela v Boavista
Vitoria Guimaraes v Benfica
Vitoria Setubal v Aves

NOVEMBER 26
Aves v Porto
Belenenses v Chaves
Benfica v Vitoria Setubal
Boavista v Moreirense
Braga v Feirense
Maritimo v Estoril
Pacos de Ferreira v Sporting
Portimonense v Tondela
Rio Ave v Vitoria Guimaraes

DECEMBER 3
Braga v Pacos de Ferreira
Chaves v Boavista
Estoril v Portimonense
Feirense v Aves
Moreirense v Maritimo
Porto v Benfica
Sporting v Belenenses
Tondela v Rio Ave
Vitoria Setubal v Vitoria Guimaraes

DECEMBER 10
Aves v Tondela
Belenenses v Pacos de Ferreira
Benfica v Estoril
Boavista v Sporting
Maritimo v Braga
Portimonense v Chaves
Rio Ave v Moreirense
Vitoria Guimaraes v Feirense
Vitoria Setubal v Porto

DECEMBER 17
Braga v Belenenses
Chaves v Rio Ave
Estoril v Aves
Feirense v Vitoria Setubal
Moreirense Vitoria v Guimaraes
Pacos de Ferreira v Boavista
Porto v Maritimo
Sporting v Portimonense
Tondela v Benfica

DECEMBER 20
Aves v Moreirense
Benfica v Sporting
Boavista v Braga
Feirense v Porto
Maritimo v Chaves
Portimonense v Belenenses
Rio Ave v Pacos de Ferreira
Vitoria Guimaraes v Tondela
Vitoria Setubal v Estoril

JANUARY 6
Belenenses v Boavista
Braga v Rio Ave
Chaves v Aves
Estoril v Feirense
Moreirense v Benfica
Pacos de Ferreira v Portimonense
Porto v Vitoria Guimaraes
Sporting v Maritimo
Tondela v Vitoria Setubal

JANUARY 14
Belenenses v Rio Ave
Boavista v Portimonense
Braga v Benfica
Chaves v Vitoria Guimaraes
Estoril v Porto
Moreirense v Vitoria Setubal
Pacos de Ferreira v Maritimo
Sporting v Aves
Tondela v Feirense

JANUARY 20
Aves v Pacos de Ferreira
Benfica v Chaves
Feirense v Moreirense
Maritimo v Belenenses
Portimonense v Braga
Porto v Tondela
Rio Ave v Boavista
Vitoria Guimaraes v Estoril
Vitoria Setubal v Sporting

JANUARY 31
Belenenses v Benfica
Boavista v Maritimo
Braga v Aves
Chaves v Vitoria Setubal
Estoril v Tondela
Moreirense v Porto
Pacos de Ferreira v Feirense
Portimonense v Rio Ave
Sporting v Vitoria Guimaraes

FEBRUARY 4
Aves v Boavista
Benfica v Rio Ave
Estoril v Sporting
Feirense v Chaves
Maritimo v Portimonense
Porto v Braga
Tondela v Moreirense
Vitoria Guimaraes v Pacos de Ferreira
Vitoria Setubal v Belenenses

FEBRUARY 11
Belenenses v Aves
Boavista v Vitoria Guimaraes
Braga v Vitoria Setubal
Chaves v Porto
Moreirense v Estoril
Pacos de Ferreira v Tondela
Portimonense v Benfica
Rio Ave v Maritimo
Sporting v Feirense

FEBRUARY 18
Aves v Maritimo
Benfica v Boavista
Estoril v Belenenses
Feirense v Portimonense
Moreirense v Chaves
Porto v Rio Ave
Tondela v Sporting
Vitoria Guimaraes v Braga
Vitoria Setubal v Pacos de Ferreira

FEBRUARY 25
Belenenses v Feirense
Boavista v Vitoria Setubal
Braga v Tondela
Chaves v Estoril
Maritimo v Vitoria Guimaraes
Pacos de Ferreira v Benfica
Portimonense v Porto
Rio Ave v Aves
Sporting v Moreirense

MARCH 4
Aves v Portimonense
Benfica v Maritimo
Estoril v Braga
Feirense v Boavista
Moreirense v Pacos de Ferreira
Porto v Sporting
Tondela v Chaves
Vitoria Guimaraes v Belenenses
Vitoria Setubal v Rio Ave

MARCH 11
Belenenses v Tondela
Benfica v Aves
Boavista v Estoril
Braga v Moreirense
Chaves v Sporting
Maritimo v Vitoria Setubal
Pacos de Ferreira v Porto
Portimonense v Vitoria Guimaraes
Rio Ave v Feirense

MARCH 18
Chaves v Braga
Estoril v Pacos de Ferreira
Feirense v Benfica
Moreirense v Belenenses
Porto v Boavista
Sporting v Rio Ave
Tondela v Maritimo
Vitoria Guimaraes v Aves
Vitoria Setubal v Portimonense

MARCH 31
Aves v Vitoria Setubal
Belenenses v Porto
Benfica v Vitoria Guimaraes
Boavista v Tondela
Braga v Sporting
Maritimo v Feirense
Pacos de Ferreira v Chaves
Portimonense v Moreirense
Rio Ave v Estoril

APRIL 7
Chaves v Belenenses
Estoril v Maritimo
Feirense v Braga
Moreirense v Boavista
Porto v Aves
Sporting v Pacos de Ferreira
Tondela v Portimonense
Vitoria Guimaraes v Rio Ave
Vitoria Setubal v Benfica

APRIL 15
Aves v Feirense
Belenenses v Sporting
Benfica v Porto
Boavista v Chaves
Maritimo v Moreirense
Pacos de Ferreira v Braga
Portimonense v Estoril
Rio Ave v Tondela
Vitoria Guimaraes v Vitoria Setubal

APRIL 22
Braga v Maritimo
Chaves v Portimonense
Estoril v Benfica
Feirense v Vitoria Guimaraes
Moreirense v Rio Ave
Pacos de Ferreira v Belenenses
Porto v Vitoria Setubal
Sporting v Boavista
Tondela v Aves

APRIL 29
Aves v Estoril
Belenenses v Braga
Benfica v Tondela
Boavista v Pacos de Ferreira
Maritimo v Porto
Portimonense v Sporting
Rio Ave v Chaves
Vitoria Guimaraes v Moreirense
Vitoria Setubal v Feirense

MAY 6
Belenenses v Portimonense
Braga v Boavista
Chaves v Maritimo
Estoril v Vitoria Setubal
Moreirense v Aves
Porto v Feirense
Pacos de Ferreira v Rio Ave
Sporting v Benfica
Tondela v Vitoria Guimaraes

MAY 13
Aves v Chaves
Benfica v Moreirense
Boavista v Belenenses
Feirense v Estoril
Maritimo v Sporting
Portimonense v Pacos de Ferreira
Rio Ave v Braga
Vitoria Guimaraes v Porto
Vitoria Setubal v Tondela

SPAIN: LA LIGA

AUGUST 20
Athletic Bilbao v Getafe
Barcelona v Real Betis
Celta Vigo v Real Sociedad
Deportivo La Coruna v Real Madrid
Girona v Atletico Madrid
Leganes v Alaves
Levante v Villarreal
Malaga v Eibar
Sevilla v Espanyol
Valencia v Las Palmas

AUGUST 27
Alaves v Barcelona
Eibar v Athletic Bilbao
Espanyol v Leganes
Getafe v Sevilla
Girona v Malaga
Las Palmas v Atletico Madrid
Levante v Deportivo La Coruna
Real Betis v Celta Vigo
Real Madrid v Valencia
Real Sociedad v Villarreal

SEPTEMBER 10
Athletic Bilbao v Girona
Barcelona v Espanyol
Celta Vigo v Alaves
Deportivo La Coruna v Real Sociedad
Leganes v Getafe
Malaga v Las Palmas
Real Madrid v Levante
Sevilla v Eibar
Valencia v Atletico Madrid
Villarreal v Real Betis

SEPTEMBER 17
Alaves v Villarreal
Atletico Madrid v Malaga
Eibar v Leganes
Espanyol v Celta Vigo
Getafe v Barcelona
Girona v Sevilla
Las Palmas v Athletic Bilbao
Levante v Valencia
Real Betis v Deportivo La Coruna
Real Sociedad v Real Madrid

SEPTEMBER 20
Athletic Bilbao v Atletico Madrid
Barcelona v Eibar
Celta Vigo v Getafe
Deportivo La Coruna v Alaves
Leganes v Girona
Levante v Real Sociedad
Real Madrid v Real Betis
Sevilla v Las Palmas
Valencia v Malaga
Villarreal v Espanyol

SEPTEMBER 24
Alaves v Real Madrid
Atletico Madrid v Sevilla
Eibar v Celta Vigo
Espanyol v Deportivo La Coruna
Getafe v Villarreal
Girona v Barcelona
Las Palmas v Leganes
Malaga v Athletic Bilbao
Real Betis v Levante
Real Sociedad v Valencia

OCTOBER 1
Barcelona v Las Palmas
Celta Vigo v Girona
Deportivo La Coruna v Getafe
Leganes v Atletico Madrid
Levante v Alaves
Real Madrid v Espanyol
Real Sociedad v Real Betis
Sevilla v Malaga
Valencia v Athletic Bilbao
Villarreal v Eibar

OCTOBER 15
Alaves v Real Sociedad
Athletic Bilbao v Sevilla
Atletico Madrid v Barcelona
Eibar v Deportivo La Coruna

Espanyol v Levante
Getafe v Real Madrid
Girona v Villarreal
Las Palmas v Celta Vigo
Malaga v Leganes
Real Betis v Valencia

OCTOBER 22

Barcelona v Malaga
Celta Vigo v Atletico Madrid
Deportivo La Coruna v Girona
Leganes v Athletic Bilbao
Levante v Getafe
Real Betis v Alaves
Real Madrid v Eibar
Real Sociedad v Espanyol
Valencia v Sevilla
Villarreal v Las Palmas

OCTOBER 29

Alaves v Valencia
Athletic Bilbao v Barcelona
Atletico Madrid v Villarreal
Eibar v Levante
Espanyol v Real Betis
Getafe v Real Sociedad
Girona v Real Madrid
Las Palmas v Deportivo La Coruna
Malaga v Celta Vigo
Sevilla v Leganes

NOVEMBER 5

Alaves v Espanyol
Barcelona v Sevilla
Celta Vigo v Athletic Bilbao
Deportivo La Coruna v Atletico Madrid
Levante v Girona
Real Betis v Getafe
Real Madrid v Las Palmas
Real Sociedad v Eibar
Valencia v Leganes
Villarreal v Malaga

NOVEMBER 19

Athletic Bilbao v Villarreal
Atletico Madrid v Real Madrid
Eibar v Real Betis
Espanyol v Valencia
Getafe v Alaves
Girona v Real Sociedad
Las Palmas v Levante
Leganes v Barcelona
Malaga v Deportivo La Coruna
Sevilla v Celta Vigo

NOVEMBER 26

Alaves v Eibar
Celta Vigo v Leganes
Deportivo La Coruna v Athletic Bilbao
Espanyol v Getafe
Levante v Atletico Madrid
Real Betis v Girona
Real Madrid v Malaga
Real Sociedad v Las Palmas
Valencia v Barcelona
Villarreal v Sevilla

DECEMBER 3

Athletic Bilbao v Real Madrid
Atletico Madrid v Real Sociedad
Barcelona v Celta Vigo
Eibar v Espanyol
Getafe v Valencia
Girona v Alaves
Las Palmas v Real Betis
Leganes v Villarreal
Malaga v Levante
Sevilla v Deportivo La Coruna

DECEMBER 10

Alaves v Las Palmas
Deportivo La Coruna v Leganes
Espanyol v Girona
Getafe v Eibar
Levante v Athletic Bilbao
Real Betis v Atletico Madrid
Real Madrid v Sevilla
Real Sociedad v Malaga
Valencia v Celta Vigo
Villarreal v Barcelona

DECEMBER 17

Athletic Bilbao v Real Sociedad
Atletico Madrid v Alaves
Barcelona v Deportivo La Coruna
Celta Vigo v Villarreal
Eibar v Valencia
Girona v Getafe
Las Palmas v Espanyol
Leganes v Real Madrid
Malaga v Real Betis
Sevilla v Levante

DECEMBER 20

Alaves v Malaga
Deportivo La Coruna v Celta Vigo
Eibar v Girona
Espanyol v Atletico Madrid
Getafe v Las Palmas
Levante v Leganes
Real Betis v Athletic Bilbao
Real Madrid v Barcelona
Real Sociedad v Sevilla
Valencia v Villarreal

JANUARY 7

Athletic Bilbao v Alaves
Atletico Madrid v Getafe
Barcelona v Levante
Celta Vigo v Real Madrid
Las Palmas v Eibar
Leganes v Real Sociedad
Malaga v Espanyol
Sevilla v Real Betis
Valencia v Girona
Villarreal v Deportivo La Coruna

JANUARY 14

Alaves v Sevilla
Deportivo La Coruna v Valencia
Eibar v Atletico Madrid
Espanyol v Athletic Bilbao
Getafe v Malaga
Girona v Las Palmas
Levante v Celta Vigo
Real Betis v Leganes
Real Madrid v Villarreal
Real Sociedad v Barcelona

JANUARY 21

Alaves v Leganes
Atletico Madrid v Girona
Eibar v Malaga
Espanyol v Sevilla
Getafe v Athletic Bilbao
Las Palmas v Valencia
Real Betis v Barcelona
Real Madrid v Deportivo La Coruna
Real Sociedad v Celta Vigo
Villarreal v Levante

JANUARY 28

Athletic Bilbao v Eibar
Atletico Madrid v Las Palmas
Barcelona v Alaves
Celta Vigo v Real Betis
Deportivo La Coruna v Levante
Leganes v Espanyol
Malaga v Girona
Sevilla v Getafe
Valencia v Real Madrid
Villarreal v Real Sociedad

FEBRUARY 4

Alaves v Celta Vigo
Atletico Madrid v Valencia
Eibar v Sevilla
Espanyol v Barcelona
Getafe v Leganes
Girona v Athletic Bilbao
Las Palmas v Malaga
Levante v Real Madrid
Real Betis v Villarreal
Real Sociedad v Deportivo La Coruna

FEBRUARY 11

Athletic Bilbao v Las Palmas
Barcelona v Getafe
Celta Vigo v Espanyol
Deportivo La Coruna v Real Betis
Leganes v Eibar
Malaga v Atletico Madrid
Real Madrid v Real Sociedad
Sevilla v Girona
Valencia v Levante
Villarreal v Alaves

FEBRUARY 18

Alaves v Deportivo La Coruna
Atletico Madrid v Athletic Bilbao
Eibar v Barcelona
Espanyol v Villarreal
Getafe v Celta Vigo
Girona v Leganes
Las Palmas v Sevilla
Malaga v Valencia
Real Betis v Real Madrid
Real Sociedad v Levante

FEBRUARY 25

Athletic Bilbao v Malaga
Barcelona v Girona
Celta Vigo v Eibar
Deportivo La Coruna v Espanyol
Leganes v Las Palmas
Levante v Real Betis
Real Madrid v Alaves
Sevilla v Atletico Madrid
Valencia v Real Sociedad
Villarreal v Getafe

FEBRUARY 28

Alaves v Levante
Athletic Bilbao v Valencia
Atletico Madrid v Leganes
Eibar v Villarreal
Espanyol v Real Madrid
Getafe v Deportivo La Coruna
Girona v Celta Vigo
Las Palmas v Barcelona
Malaga v Sevilla
Real Betis v Real Sociedad

MARCH 4

Barcelona v Atletico Madrid
Celta Vigo v Las Palmas
Deportivo La Coruna v Eibar
Leganes v Malaga
Levante v Espanyol
Real Madrid v Getafe
Real Sociedad v Alaves
Sevilla v Athletic Bilbao
Valencia v Real Betis
Villarreal v Girona

MARCH 11

Alaves v Real Betis
Athletic Bilbao v Leganes
Atletico Madrid v Celta Vigo
Eibar v Real Madrid
Espanyol v Real Sociedad
Getafe v Levante
Girona v Deportivo La Coruna
Las Palmas v Villarreal
Malaga v Barcelona
Sevilla v Valencia

MARCH 18

Barcelona v Athletic Bilbao
Celta Vigo v Malaga
Deportivo La Coruna v Las Palmas
Leganes v Sevilla
Levante v Eibar
Real Betis v Espanyol
Real Madrid v Girona
Real Sociedad v Getafe
Valencia v Alaves
Villarreal v Atletico Madrid

APRIL 1

Athletic Bilbao v Celta Vigo
Atletico Madrid v Deportivo La Coruna
Eibar v Real Sociedad
Espanyol v Alaves
Getafe v Real Betis
Girona v Levante
Las Palmas v Real Madrid
Leganes v Valencia
Malaga v Villarreal
Sevilla v Barcelona

APRIL 8

Alaves v Getafe
Barcelona v Leganes
Celta Vigo v Sevilla
Deportivo La Coruna v Malaga
Levante v Las Palmas
Real Betis v Eibar
Real Madrid v Atletico Madrid
Real Sociedad v Girona
Valencia v Espanyol
Villarreal v Athletic Bilbao

APRIL 15

Athletic Bilbao v Deportivo La Coruna
Atletico Madrid v Levante
Barcelona v Valencia
Eibar v Alaves
Getafe v Espanyol
Girona v Real Betis
Las Palmas v Real Sociedad
Leganes v Celta Vigo
Malaga v Real Madrid
Sevilla v Villarreal

APRIL 18

Alaves v Girona
Celta Vigo v Barcelona
Deportivo La Coruna v Sevilla
Espanyol v Eibar
Levante v Malaga
Real Betis v Las Palmas
Real Madrid v Athletic Bilbao
Real Sociedad v Atletico Madrid
Valencia v Getafe
Villarreal v Leganes

APRIL 22

Athletic Bilbao v Levante
Atletico Madrid v Real Betis
Barcelona v Villarreal
Celta Vigo v Valencia
Eibar v Getafe
Girona v Espanyol
Las Palmas v Alaves
Leganes v Deportivo La Coruna
Malaga v Real Sociedad
Sevilla v Real Madrid

APRIL 29

Alaves v Atletico Madrid
Deportivo La Coruna v Barcelona
Espanyol v Las Palmas
Getafe v Girona
Levante v Sevilla
Real Betis v Malaga
Real Madrid v Leganes
Real Sociedad v Athletic Bilbao
Valencia v Eibar
Villarreal v Celta Vigo

MAY 6

Athletic Bilbao v Real Betis
Atletico Madrid v Espanyol
Barcelona v Real Madrid
Celta Vigo v Deportivo La Coruna
Girona v Eibar
Las Palmas v Getafe
Leganes v Levante
Malaga v Alaves
Sevilla v Real Sociedad
Villarreal v Valencia

MAY 13

Alaves v Athletic Bilbao
Deportivo La Coruna v Villarreal
Eibar v Las Palmas
Espanyol v Malaga
Getafe v Atletico Madrid
Girona v Valencia
Levante v Barcelona
Real Betis v Sevilla
Real Madrid v Celta Vigo
Real Sociedad v Leganes

MAY 20

Athletic Bilbao v Espanyol
Atletico Madrid v Eibar
Barcelona v Real Sociedad
Celta Vigo v Levante
Las Palmas v Girona
Leganes v Real Betis
Malaga v Getafe
Sevilla v Alaves
Valencia v Deportivo La Coruna
Villarreal v Real Madrid

July 5-August 3, 2017

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Wednesday July 5

SPAIN: Barcelona announce Lionel Messi will sign a four-year extension to his current contract, binding the 30-year-old to the club until 2021.

Thursday July 6

MALAWI: Eight people, including seven children, die in a stampede at Bingu National Stadium in Lilongwe as thousands try to find seats ahead of a friendly between Nyasa Big Bullets and Silver Strikers.
SERBIA: Vojvodina midfielder Nikola Trujic is attacked in the changing room by his own fans following his side's 2-0 loss away to Ruzomberok of Slovakia in the Europa League.
ZANZIBAR: Four months after being accepted into CAF, Zanzibar's membership is rescinded.

Friday July 7

BRAZIL: Sergio Serra quits as president of Brazilian second-tier side Paysandu after armed men threaten to kill him if the club are relegated to the third division.

Saturday JULY 8

ARGENTINA: Under the guidance of former Real Madrid defender Gabriel Heinze, Argentinos Juniors gain promotion back to the top flight with a 1-0 victory over Gimnasia Jujuy.
HOLLAND: Ajax's pre-season friendly against Werder Bremen in Austria is abandoned when midfielder Abdelhak Nouri collapses and has to be taken to hospital by helicopter.

Sunday July 9

COSAFA CUP: Zimbabwe win the tournament for a fifth time, beating Zambia 3-1 in the Final.
EGYPT: Seats are ripped out and flares thrown onto the pitch as Zamalek draw 2-2 at home to Al Ahly Tripoli and are eliminated from the CAF Champions League at the group stage.

Monday July 10

ENGLAND: Manchester United sign Everton striker Romelu Lukaku for an initial £75m.

Tuesday July 11

GERMANY: USA under-20s keeper Jonathan Klinsmann, who is the son of former Germany striker Jurgen Klinsmann, signs a pro contract with Hertha Berlin following a successful trial. Real Madrid's James Rodriguez joins Bayern Munich on a two-year loan deal.

Wednesday July 12

BRAZIL: Vasco da Gama are ordered to play their home games behind closed doors following disturbances at their ground after Saturday's 1-0 loss to Flamengo in which a fan was shot dead.
FRANCE: Relegated from Ligue 1 last season, Bastia fail in their appeal against relegation to the third tier on financial grounds. AC Ajaccio remain in Ligue 2 after a successful appeal against demotion for similar reasons.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich cancel the contract of their Allianz Arena tenants 1860 Munich, who have slipped down the German league.

Trouble...fans disrupt Zamalek's game against Al Ahly Tripoli

Bragging rights...Spartak Moscow with the Russian Super Cup

Thursday July 13

HOLLAND: Ajax says midfielder Abdelhak Nouri, who collapsed during a friendly on Saturday, suffered "serious and permanent brain damage" and his chances of recovery from the damage are nil.

Friday July 14

GOLD CUP: French Guiana, who drew 0-0 with Honduras on Tuesday, forfeit the game 3-0 after playing ex-France international Florent Malouda, who was ineligible.
RUSSIA: Spartak Moscow beat local rivals Lokomotiv by 2-1 in the Russian Super Cup.

Saturday July 15

EURO U19s: Lukas Nmecha scores the winning goal as England beat Portugal 2-1 in the Final.
SENEGAL: A wall collapses at the Stade Demba Diop in Dakar, killing eight people as fighting breaks out between rival fans at the end of the League Cup Final, in which Stade de Mbour beat US Ouakam 2-1.

Sunday July 16

RUSSIA: Zenit start their Premier League campaign with a 5,442-mile trip to newly promoted SKA Khabarovsk, which they win 2-0.
URUGUAY: Nacional beat Defensor

1-0 in the Torneo Intermedio Final.

Monday July 17

ENGLAND: Romelu Lukaku scores on his Manchester United debut as they beat Real Salt Lake 2-1 in a friendly in Utah.
ITALY: Roma's Francesco Totti officially confirms his retirement as a player and announces he is to become a director of the club.

Tuesday July 18

SPAIN: Angel Maria Villar, president of the Spanish Football Federation and vice-president of FIFA and UEFA, is arrested as part of a corruption investigation.

Wednesday July 19

ALBANIA: Christian Panucci is appointed national coach.
MACEDONIA: Vardar record their first European victory for 14 years, beating Malmo of Sweden 3-1 in the Champions League.
SPAIN: Barcelona president Josep ➤

Debut goal... Romelo Lukaku

Gold Cup

MIKE WOITALLA

USA coach makes continental history

Bruce Arena wins his third Gold Cup Final

Victory over Jamaica gave USA a sixth Gold Cup title – one less than Mexico – and earned Bruce Arena a record-breaking third CONCACAF crown, although the hosts' boss conceded: "Well, I have coached in more Gold Cups than anyone else."

Arena called on just one European-based player for the finals – Nottingham Forest's Eric Lichaj – and at his fifth Gold Cup he started 27 different players in his side's six games, taking full advantage of the competition rules that allow six new players to be brought in for the knockout stage.

After a 1-1 draw with Panama, the US coasted through their group, beating Martinique (3-2) and Nicaragua (3-0), after which Arena brought in veterans Michael Bradley, Jozy Altidore and Clint Dempsey, who helped the USA beat El Salvador (2-0) and Costa Rica (2-0) to claim a place in the Final. But just as important were the performances of a quintet of promising players who had been given little playing time, or none in the case of left-back Jorge Villafana, before Arena took over: Kellyn Acosta, Paul Arriola and Jordan Morris, who are 22, and 27-year-olds Darlington Nagbe and Villafana.

"They are players with not that much experience at the international level, not that many caps," said Arena of the five, who all played in the Final.

"And to put them in the fire tonight was good. I think they walked away with passing grades. That is encouraging."

Morris was the hero, scoring his third goal of the tournament with the 88th-minute game winner in the Final against a Jamaica side that started with nine current or former MLS players themselves.

That Jamaica made it to the Final was not that much of a shock as they had been finalists last time out, in 1995, when they beat the US in the semis before losing out to Mexico. The Reggae Boyz gained their revenge over *El Tri* this time with a 1-0 victory to reach the Final.

Mexico's failure was not that big a surprise as they brought a second-string squad to the tournament as it kicked off just five days after Mexico lost on penalties to Portugal in the Confederations Cup third-place game. And their cause wasn't helped by coach Juan Carlos Osorio being banned for six matches on the opening day of the tournament for using insulting words and displaying an aggressive attitude towards the match officials in that final game in Russia.

With no Mexico in the showpiece finale – every Gold Cup they have played in has been a sell-out – the attendance of 63,032 for the Final at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, was disappointing. However, with Arena's side now on a 14-game unbeaten run ahead of September's World Cup qualifiers, few will be worrying about that. WS

Danger...Jordan Morris in the Final

➤ Maria Bartomeu says Neymar will not be joining Paris Saint-Germain, despite reports they have triggered his €222m release clause.

Thursday July 20

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP: CAF vote to move the tournament – which is held every two years – to June and July from January and February as of 2019, and expand the number of finalists to 24.
DJIBOUTI: Following Saturday's 5-1 home loss to Ethiopia in the first leg of their African Nations Championship qualifier, the Djibouti Football Federation dissolves the national team in a bid to "stop poor results" and says the squad and coaching staff have been disbanded "to focus on youth football".
TURKEY: Trailing 2-0 from the first leg in Sweden, Galatasaray exit the Europa League in the second qualifying round when they can only draw 1-1 at home to Ostersund.
USA: Seattle Sounders become the first MLS side to win after being 3-0 down, scoring four second-half goals to beat DC United 4-3.

Friday July 21

CROATIA: Hajduk Split are ordered to play the home leg of their Europa League qualifier against Brondby behind closed doors due to the "racist behaviour" of the club's supporters and the throwing of objects against Levski Sofia in the previous round.
ENGLAND: Chelsea sign Real Madrid striker Alvaro Morata for a club record £60m.

Saturday July 22

BELGIUM: Anderlecht beat Zulte-Waregem 2-1 to win the Belgian Super Cup.
UKRAINE: Defending champions Shakhtar Donetsk lose 1-0 at home to Dynamo Kiev.

Sunday July 23

CHILE: Last year's Chilean Cup winners Colo Colo beat Apertura champions Universidad Catolica 4-1 in the Super Cup.
GERMANY: Former Bayern Munich captain Philipp Lahm, who retired in May, is named German Footballer of the Year for 2017.

Monday July 24

ENGLAND: Benjamin Mendy joins Manchester City from Monaco for £52m and becomes the world's most expensive defender.

Tuesday July 25

BRAZIL: Flamengo's former Brazil ➤

Africa

MARK GLEESON

Ahmad rings the changes

African Nations Cup to be a summer tournament

Changes to the format of the African Nations Cup and the two annual African club competitions were finally made in the wake of the exit of Issa Hayatou, as new president Ahmad of Madagascar seeks to make an impact on the Confederation of African Football.

At a two-day symposium in Rabat, he delivered on his promise of a forum where CAF would listen to suggestions on how best to change the game on the continent. In his election campaign, before toppling Hayatou in March, Ahmad said he would be a leader who would consult all stakeholders – including former top players, who he invited to Morocco to join in the deliberations. And such as Jay-Jay Okocha, Abedi Pele and Joseph-Antoine Bell seemed genuinely delighted to finally be given a voice, even if they were mostly shuffled off to a workshop about player mentoring.

The real business at the symposium concerned the African Nations Cup, the African Champions League and the African Confederation Cup, and that appeared to have all been worked out beforehand, with the conclave simply a rubber-stamp.

Keeping the frequency of the Nations Cup to every two years but moving it to the middle of the year – meaning players no longer have to deal with club-versus-country conflicts – was expected, and not before time too. Hayatou had dug in his heels about this on the grounds of the weather, but in reality it was because he did not want to be dictated to by European clubs. African sensibilities over how Europe perceives the continent run deep and offence is often taken, even though the European footballing products enjoy slavish devotion.

What was unexpected was the decision to open up the finals to 24 teams, ostensibly to chase increased revenue but suspiciously also a play to allow Morocco to host the 2019 finals in place of Cameroon in a final humiliation of the Hayatou era.

It was on the eve of the symposium, the Royal Moroccan Football Federation's ambitious president Faouzi Lekjaa lifted the lid on the ruse. "Cameroon had to organise the Nations Cup in the old format [of 16 teams]," he explained. "Whether Cameroon will be able to fulfill the new specifications, we will only know in the coming days.

Ready...Morocco could step in and host the 2019 African Nations Cup

"In case of them not having the capacity, other countries will be invited to replace them. Morocco will be in the race. Morocco will not hesitate for a second to respond favourably to a CAF request to host this Nations Cup. Moreover, because in 2015 at the time of Ebola epidemic, Cameroon's management [Hayatou] deprived us of the organisation of this competition.

"In 2019, we will replace Cameroon as host of the Nations Cup. It is the revenge of history."

In September there will be an inspection trip to Cameroon and doubts will probably be raised about their ability to handle the new requirements. They might be diplomatically given more time to find the resources to host a 24-team competition – say the 2021 finals – allowing Morocco to ride to the rescue for 2019.

Morocco spent several million dollars organising the seminar and has signed a multitude of co-operation agreements with other African countries. It is offering

training camps, friendly matches and technical equipment, and a hastily created third vice-presidency of CAF is Lekjaa's first reward.

The expanded Nations Cup means the list of future hosts who can handle the infrastructure and financial demands will be limited. But Ahmad argues that Europe is not exactly endowed with too many nations who can handle their expanded continental competition, insisting: "Africa has the possibility to host tournaments with the 24 teams, that is not a dream."

Changing the timing of the finals lifts immense pressure off players who are increasingly caught in a tug of war between club and country when the finals were held in January. The spectre of many refusing to go to future finals loomed large. Now everyone can breathe easy once again.

Impact...CAF president Ahmad

The argument that the finals could not be moved as the weather would either be too hot or too rainy were unscientific and without real substance. If that was indeed the case, why did FIFA give Africa the right to host the 2010 World Cup? Or why did CAF schedule the matches of the newly expanded Champions League and Confederation Cup through the months of May to July this year?

That will no longer be happening after the decision to now play the two club cups from August to May, as is the case with the UEFA club competitions.

It takes the pressure off most clubs who have had to give up their off-season to play in the group phase.

But whether this change takes effect next year – will there be a 2018-19 Champions League and Confederation Cup? – remains unclear.

And on this matter, Ahmad points out that "we still have to look at this and the harmonisation of the football calendar". WS

➤ midfielder Ederson, 31, reveals he has testicular cancer and will undergo surgery.

Wednesday July 26

GOLD CUP: Jordan Morris' late goal gives USA a 2-1 win over Jamaica in the Final.
SPAIN: Angel Maria Villar's three-decade reign as head of Spanish football ends as he is suspended for a year following his arrest on corruption charges.
TURKEY: Fatih Terim resigns as coach of the national side two weeks after he was involved in a brawl with a restaurant owner in the west-coast beach resort of Alacati.

Thursday July 27

SPAIN: Suspended Spanish Football Federation president Angel Maria Villar resigns from his roles as vice-president of UEFA and FIFA.

Saturday July 29

FRANCE: Dani Alves scores on his competitive debut for Paris Saint-Germain as they beat Monaco 2-1 in the French Super Cup.
SOUTH AFRICA: Two people die in a crush as fans force their way into the 87,000-capacity FNB Stadium for the Soweto derby between Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates.

Sunday July 30

ZAMBIA: Three late goals see Zambia win the COSAFA Under-17 title for the first time, beating hosts Mauritius 3-0 in the Final.

Monday July 31

ENGLAND: Manchester United's Phil Jones is suspended for two games for verbally abusing an anti-doping officer at May's Europa League Final, in which he was an unused sub in the 2-0 win over Ajax.

Tuesday August 1

SPAIN: An investigation into the alleged fixing of a 2011 Liga game that saw Real Zaragoza beat Levante 2-1 to avoid relegation, is dropped due to a lack of evidence.

Wednesday August 2

SCOTLAND: Hearts put under-20s coach Jon Daly in interim charge after sacking Ian Cathro four days before the start of the Premiership.
TURKEY: Mircea Lucescu replaces Fatih Terim as national coach.

Thursday August 3

FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain pay a world-record transfer fee of €222m to trigger Neymar's release clause with Barcelona. WS

China

JOHN DUERDEN

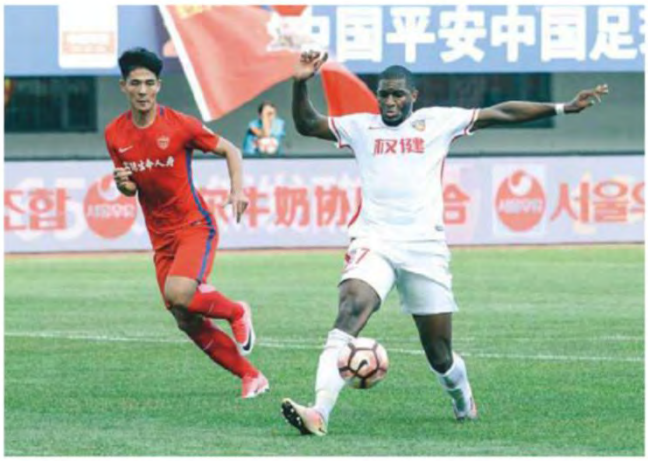
CSL's financial problems unfounded

The rumours of bans for leading clubs are misplaced

It is perhaps a measure of just how far the Chinese Super League (CSL) has come that the competition is now able to make international headlines even when its clubs are not raining down untold fortunes on world-famous players.

In Britain, there seemed to be some glee among the tabloid newspapers as they announced that 13 of the CSL's 16 teams were in danger of being thrown out, with the *Daily Mirror* reporting that all but three clubs could be "forced to forfeit their participation in the competition next season after failing to pay their players properly".

According to the paper, the deadline to do so was August 15, and not meeting the deadline would lead



Incoming... Anthony Modeste

to the Chinese Football Association (CFA) taking the most serious of steps. After this, it did not take long for online articles to appear with lists of CSL players that could soon be heading to Premier League clubs on the cheap. It was, however, all a little premature.

In July, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) wrote to all its member associations, instructing them to tell all their clubs to settle outstanding debts on player transfers, bonuses and wages or face being barred from entry in the following edition of the Asian Champions League.

Stars from Brazil...Oscar (left) and Hulk

An AFC statement read: "Clubs have until the last day of August to demonstrate that the overdue amounts have been fully settled, deferred by mutual agreement or are the subject of a serious complaint which has been submitted to a competent authority.

"The move is intended to promote financial discipline among football clubs in Asia."

Although the comments were not specifically targeted towards Chinese teams, for some reason the CFA seemed to be confused and it wrote to 18 clubs in three divisions and threatened them with expulsion from next year's league if they did not comply.

Ten of the 13 top-flight clubs were quick to publicly refute the possibility. Shanghai SIPG, who have been one of the biggest spenders after paying over $100million in the space of six months on Brazilians Hulk and Oscar, announced: "After verification, we've already paid the arrears in full in October last year and we've sent the related certificates to CFA.

"We hereby certify that our club doesn't have any arrears problem."

Guangzhou Evergrande also made their feelings known, declaring that all was well in this regard with the reigning champions.

Meanwhile, on the pitch, these two sides are leading the way in a title race that is shaping up to be the best for some time, as Guangzhou go for a seventh successive championship and Shanghai dream of a first. They also meet in the quarter-final of the Asian Champions League in August and September.

There was little business done during the summer transfer window as most clubs already have their full quota of foreign players. With the rules stating that teams can sign five overseas players but only three can be named in their match-day squad, why add someone to a foreign contingent if they can't play?

The exception were Tianjin Quanjian, who were promoted last season and had been linked with Diego Costa and Wayne Rooney. Riding high in the league, Tianjin tried to prise Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from Borussia Dortmund without success, so instead they signed Anthony Modeste from Cologne. But even with the French striker on board, Fabio Cannavaro's side will probably struggle to catch the top two.

> **Teams can sign five overseas players but only three can be in the match-day squad, so why add someone to a foreign contingent if they can't play?**

Shanghai managed to stay in second place despite an eight-game ban being handed to Oscar after he kicked the ball at two opponents in June to spark a multi-person brawl.

As the midfielder was not even booked at the time, his sentence can only be described as draconian.

And when statements of support from his coach Andre Villas-Boas, Brazilian team-mate Hulk and local star Wu Lei cost them two-game bans each, it left some people wondering whether the CFA simply wanted to hand the title to Guangzhou. WS

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: QUARTER-FINALS

Al Ain (UAE) v Al Hilal (Sau) (Aug 21 & Sep 11)
Persepolis (Irn) v Al Ahli (Sau) (Aug 22 & Sep 12)
Shanghai SIPG (Chn) v Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) (Aug 22 & Sep 12)
Kawasaki Frontale (Jap) v Urawa Red Diamonds (Jap) (Aug 23 & Sep 13)

Familiar foes... Shanghai SIPG's Elkeson (red) and Zhang Linpeng of Guangzhou Evergrande will meet in the Champions League

Internationals

CONCACAF GOLD CUP

Played in the United States

Group A

Jul 7 - Harrison
French Guiana 2 (Contout 69, Privat 71)
Canada 4 (Jakovic 28, Arfield 45+2, Davies 60, 85)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 25,817. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)

Jul 7 - Harrison
Honduras 0
Costa Rica 1 (Urena 39)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,817. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)

Jul11 - Houston
Costa Rica 1 (Calvo 42)
Canada 1 (Davies 26)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,019. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)

Jul11 - Houston
Honduras 3
French Guiana 0
Ref: Martinez (Cub)
Game awarded 3-0 to Honduras because French Guiana fielded an ineligible player (Florent Malouda) in the tie (originally a 0-0 draw)

Jul14 - Frisco
Costa Rica 3 (Rodriguez 4, Wallace 79, Ramirez 83)
French Guiana 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ramos (Mex)
Sent off: Ludovic Baal (French Guiana) 61

Jul14 - Frisco
Canada 0
Honduras 0
Att: 10,048. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)

CONCACAF GOLD CUP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Canada (Q)	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Honduras (Q)	3	1	1	1	3	1	4
French Guiana	3	0	0	3	2	10	0

Group B

Jul 8 - Nashville
United States 1 (Dwyer 50)
Panama 1 (Camargo 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,622. **Ref:** Guerrero (Mex)

Jul 8 - Nashville
Martinique 2 (Parsemain 35, Langil 66)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,515. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)

Jul12 - Tampa
Panama 2 (Diaz 50, G Torres 57)
Nicaragua 1 (Chavarria 49)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Fischer (Can)

Jul12 - Tampa
United States 3 (O Gonzalez 54, Morris 64, 76)
Martinique 2 (Parsemain 66, 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,368. **Ref:** Bejarano (CR)

Jul15 - Cleveland
Panama 3 (Murillo 44, Arroyo 60, G Torres 67)
Martinique 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Garcia (Mex)

Jul15 - Cleveland
Nicaragua 0
United States 3 (Corona 36, Rowe 56, Miazga 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 27,934. **Ref:** Matamoros (Hnd)
Sent off: Copete (Nicaragua) 85

CONCACAF GOLD CUP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (Q)	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Panama (Q)	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Martinique	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Nicaragua	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

Group C

Jul 9 - San Diego
Curacao 0
Jamaica 2 (R Williams 58, Mattocks 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Villarreal (USA)

Jul 9 - San Diego
Mexico 3 (Marin 8, E Hernandez 29, Pineda 55)
El Salvador 1 (N Bonilla 10)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 53,133. **Ref:** Moncada (Hnd)

Jul13 - Denver
El Salvador 2 (Mayen 21, Zelaya 24)
Curacao 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Hnd)

Jul13 - Denver
Mexico 0
Jamaica 0
Att: 49,121. **Ref:** Montero (CR)

Jul16 - San Antonio
Jamaica 1 (Mattocks pen 64)
El Salvador 1 (N Bonilla 15)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)

Jul16 - San Antonio
Curacao 0
Mexico 2 (Sepulveda 22, Alvarez 90+1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 44,232. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)

CONCACAF GOLD CUP – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Jamaica (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
El Salvador (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Curacao	3	0	0	3	0	6	0

● *The top 2 in each group and the 2 3rd-placed countries with the best record qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals

Jul19 - Philadelphia
Costa Rica 1 (Godoy og 77)
Panama 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Moncada (Hnd)
Costa Rica: Pemberton - Salvatierra, Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, Acosta, B Ruiz, Guzman, Tejeda (Gutierrez 86), Ramirez (Rodriguez 65; Segura 77), Urena.
Panama: Calderon - Murillo, Escobar, Chen, Ovalle, G Gomez (Heraldez 68), Barcenas, Cooper (Arroyo 58), Godoy, Camargo (Pimentel 71), G Torres.

Jul19 - Philadelphia
United States 2 (O Gonzalez 41, Lichaj 45+2)
El Salvador 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 31,615. **Ref:** Fischer (Can)
United States: Howard - Lichaj, O Gonzalez, Hedges, Morrow, Arriola (Morris 66), Nagbe (Pontius 87), Bradley, Zardes (Acosta 71), Dempsey, Altidore.
El Salvador: Carrillo - Tamacas, Romero, Mancia, Larin, Mayen (O Ceren 57), D Ceren, N Orellana, Pineda (E Sanchez 78), N Bonilla (H Alas 84), Zelaya.

Jul 20 - Glendale
Jamaica 2 (Francis 6, R Williams 50)
Canada 1 (Hoilett 61)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Montero (CR)
Jamaica: Blake - Powell, Lowe, J Taylor, Lawrence, O Gordon, Lambert (Binns 90+2), Watson, Francis (Burke 67), R Williams (Richie 81), Mattocks.
Canada: Borjan - Petrasso, Jakovic, Vitoria (James 56), De Jong, Arfield, Teibert, Piette, Hoilett, Larin (Cavallini 56), Davies (Jackson-Hamel 82).

Jul 20 - Glendale
Mexico 1 (Pizarro 4)
Honduras 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,404. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)
Mexico: J J Corona - Alvarez, Ayala, Pereira, Gallardo, Duenas, Molina (Rodriguez 65), E Hernandez, Pizarro (Lopez 90+1), Pineda, Sepulveda (E Torres 75).
Honduras: L Lopez - Crisanto, H Figueroa, M Figueroa, Alvarado, Sanchez (O Garcia 46), Elis, Mejia, Acosta (Pena 68), Quioto, Lanza (A Lopez 73).

Semi-finals

Jul 22 - Arlington
Costa Rica 0
United States 2 (Altidore 72, Dempsey 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,516. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)
Costa Rica: Pemberton - Salvatierra (Azofeifa 78), Acosta, Gonzalez, Waston, Calvo, B Ruiz, Guzman (Leiton 80), Tejeda (Gutierrez 74), Ramirez, Urena.
United States: Howard - Zusi, O Gonzalez, Besler, Villafana, Arriola (Dempsey 66), Bradley, Acosta (McCarty 85), Nagbe, Altidore (Zardes 83), Morris.

Jul 23 - Pasadena
Mexico 0
Jamaica 1 (Lawrence 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,393. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)
Mexico: J J Corona - Alvarez, Ayala, Pereira, Gutierrez (Gallardo 59), Duenas, Molina, E Hernandez (Lopez 79), Pizarro, Pineda, E Torres (Sepulveda 46).
Jamaica: Blake - Powell, Lowe, J Taylor, Lawrence, O Gordon, Watson, Richie, Francis (Morris 53), R Williams (Binns 77), Mattocks (Campbell 90+2).

Final

Jul 26 - Santa Clara
United States 2 (Altidore 45, Morris 88)
Jamaica 1 (Watson 50)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 63,032. **Ref:** Lopez (Gtm)
United States: Howard - Zusi, O Gonzalez, Besler, Villafana, Arriola (Zardes 76), Acosta (Dempsey 55), Bradley, Nagbe (McCarty 90+2), Altidore, Morris.
Jamaica: Blake (Miller 23) - Powell, Lowe, J Taylor, Lawrence, Fisher, Watson, Richie (Lambert 87), O Gordon, R Williams, Mattocks (Burke 90).

Previous winners

1991	United States
1993	Mexico
1996	Mexico
1998	Mexico
2000	Canada
2002	United States
2003	Mexico
2005	United States
2007	United States
2009	Mexico
2011	Mexico
2013	United States
2015	Mexico

COSAFA CUP

(Council of Southern Africa Football Associations; Tanzania participated as guest country)

Played in South Africa

Group A

Jun 25 - Moruleng
Tanzania 2 (Kichuya 13, 18)
Malawi 0
HT: 2-0

Jun 25 - Moruleng
Mauritius 0
Angola 1 (Quibeto 4)
HT: 0-1

Jun 27 - Phokeng
Malawi 0
Mauritius 0

Jun 27 - Phokeng
Angola 0
Tanzania 0

Jun 29 - Moruleng
Tanzania 1 (Msuva 69)
Mauritius 1 (Perticots 68)
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Balisson (Mauritius) 78

Jun 29 - Phokeng
Malawi 0
Angola 0

COSAFA CUP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tanzania (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Angola	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Mauritius	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Malawi	3	0	2	1	0	2	2

Group B

Jun 26 - Moruleng
Mozambique 0
Zimbabwe 4 (Karuru 44, 65, Mushure 78, Majarira 90+3)
HT: 0-1

Jun 26 - Moruleng
Madagascar 2 (Raveloarisona 44, Raherinaivo 75)
Seychelles 0
HT: 1-0

Jun 28 - Phokeng
Zimbabwe 0
Madagascar 0

Jun 28 - Phokeng
Seychelles 1 (Melanie 63)
Mozambique 2 (Stelio 48, Joao Simango 70)
HT: 0-0

Jun 30 - Moruleng
Mozambique 1 (Arnaldo 30)
Madagascar 4 (Fanomezana 8, 54, Ndrantoharilala 34, Raherinaivo 79)
HT: 1-2
Sent off: Nuno (Mozambique) 77

Jun 30 - Phokeng
Zimbabwe 6 (Karuru 24, 26, 67, Dube 57, Mushure 85, 90+2)
Seychelles 0
HT: 2-0

COSAFA CUP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe (Q)	3	2	1	0	10	0	7
Madagascar	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Mozambique	3	1	0	2	3	9	3
Seychelles	3	0	0	3	1	10	0

● *The 2 group winners qualified for the quarter-finals, which Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia entered directly*

Quarter-finals

Jul1 - Phokeng
Botswana 1 (Seakanyeng 79)
Zambia 2 (Mwila 10, Shonga 70)
HT: 0-1

Jul1 - Phokeng
Namibia 0
Lesotho 0
Lesotho 5-4 on pens

Jul 2 - Phokeng
South Africa 0
Tanzania 1 (Maguri 18)
HT: 0-1

Jul 2 - Phokeng
Swaziland 1 (Badenhorst 48)
Zimbabwe 2 (Karuru 16, Mutizwa 79)
HT: 0-1

● *The 4 losing countries entered the Plate semi-finals (see below "Previous winners")*

Semi-finals

Jul 5 - Moruleng
Zambia 4 (Mwila 44, Shonga 45+1, 68, Chirwa pen 56)
Tanzania 2 (Nyoni 16, Msuva 84)
HT: 2-1

Jul 5 - Moruleng
Lesotho 3 (Motebang 42, Potloane 80, Koetle pen 90+2)
Zimbabwe 4 (Mutizwa 19, 51, 83, Chawapiwa 64)
HT: 1-1

3rd-place match

Jul 7 - Moruleng
Tanzania 0
Lesotho 0
Tanzania 4-2 on pens

Final
Jul 9 - Phokeng
Zambia 1 (Mundia 39)
Zimbabwe 3 (Mutizwa 22, Chawapiwa 57, Mushure 67)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Heeralall (Mrs)
Zambia: Chibwe - Shamujompa, A Chama, Chungu (Muchindu 64), Mulenga, Malama, Chirwa, M Phiri (Ngwenya 70), Mwila, Katiba (Mundia 39), Shonga.
Zimbabwe: Chigova - Mushure, Moyo, Homora, Tigere, Karuru, Chipeta, Chakoroma, Chawapiwa (Katsvairo 82), Takwara, Mutizwa.

Previous winners (most recent)

2004	Angola
2005	Zimbabwe
2006	Zambia
2007	South Africa
2008	South Africa
2009	Zimbabwe
2013	Zambia
2015	Namibia
2016	South Africa

Plate semi-finals
Jul 4: Botswana 0 South Africa 2; Namibia 1 Swaziland 0.

Plate Final
Jul 7: South Africa 1 Namibia 0.

WINDWARD ISLANDS TOURNAMENT

Played in Grenada

Jun 28 - St George's
St Lucia 2 (Mullarkey 74, Frederick 80)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Cunningham 89)
HT: 0-0

Jun 28 - St George's
Grenada 1 (R Phillip 74)
Dominica 1 (Wade 14)
HT: 0-1

Jun 30 - Sauteurs
Dominica 2 (Wade 22, Walters 52)
Barbados 1 (Jules 41)
HT: 1-1
Sent off: E Bertrand (Dominica) 75

Jun 30 - Sauteurs
Grenada 2 (J Rennie pen 44, John-Brown 51)
St Lucia 0
HT: 1-0

Jul 3 - St George's
Barbados 1 (Edmee 73)
St Lucia 1 (Frederick 36)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Edmee (Barbados) 79; Lawrence (St Lucia) 87

Jul 3 - St George's
Grenada 4 (Williams 14, Lewis 32, 54, R Phillip 56)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 3 (Cunningham 39, Sutherland 63, M Samuel 88)
HT: 2-1

Jul 4 - St George's
St Vincent & The Grenadines 4 (Cunningham 12, M Samuel 47, 55, 90)
Barbados 2 (Holligan 6, Harte 15)
HT: 1-2

Jul 4 - St George's
St Lucia 0
Dominica 0

Jul 6 - St George's
Dominica 2 (Wade pen 26, Thomas 56)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2 (D Prescott 29, Lee 44)
HT: 1-2

Jul 6 - St George's
Grenada 0
Barbados 2 (Edmee 8, Harte 65)
HT: 0-1

WINDWARD ISLANDS TOURNAMENT – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grenada (C)	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
Dominica	4	1	3	0	5	4	6
St Lucia	4	1	2	1	3	4	5
St Vincent & G	4	1	1	2	10	10	4
Barbados	4	1	1	2	6	7	4

KING'S CUP

Played in Bangkok, Thailand

Semi-finals
Jul14
Burkina Faso 0
Belarus 0
Belarus 3-0 on pens

Jul14
Thailand 3 (Mongkol 40, Thitipan 78, Teeratep pen 90)
North Korea 0
HT: 1-0

3rd-place match
Jul16
Burkina Faso 3 (Zagre 44, L Traore 68, 73)
North Korea 3 (Pak Song-chol 4, Myong Cha-hyon pen 66, Rim Kwang-hyok 80)
HT: 1-1
Burkina Faso 4-3 on pens

Final
Jul16
Thailand 0
Belarus 0
Thailand 5-4 on pens

FRIENDLIES

Thursday, June 29
Jun 29 - Houston, USA
Mexico 1 (E Hernandez pen 32)
Ghana 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,617. **Ref:** Toledo (USA)
Mexico: Munoz (J J Corona 37) - Rodriguez, Ayala, Marin, Gallardo, Duenas (Jorge Hernandez 80), Molina, Gutierrez (Pineda 60), E Hernandez (Lopez 73), Sepulveda (Barragan 66), Pizarro (Pereira 90).
Ghana: R Ofori - Afful (Akaminko 60), Boye (Sumaila 55), J Mensah, Agbenyenu, Acheampong, E Ofori, Sackey (Abu 55), Agyepong (Accam 59), Dwamena (Gyan 85), Waris.

Saturday, July 1
Jul1 - Seattle, USA
Mexico 2 (Pizarro 19, E Hernandez pen 26)
Paraguay 1 (Bareiro 45+2)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)
Mexico: J J Corona - Rodriguez, Pereira, Marin, Gallardo, E Hernandez (Lopez 90), Molina, Duenas, Pizarro (Barragan 90+2), Pineda (Sepulveda 87), Pulido (Gutierrez 61).
Paraguay: A Silva - A Benitez, Escobar, Cardozo, Candia, M Riveros (Rojas 75), C Riveros, Bareiro (J Medina 86), Camacho (Oviedo 83), O Romero, Salcedo (Recalde 68).

Jul1 - East Hartford
United States 2 (Dwyer 19, Acosta 52)
Ghana 1 (Gyan 60)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,494. **Ref:** Cornejo (ESv)
United States: Guzan - Zusi, Hedges, Besler, Villafana (O Gonzalez 88), McCarty, Acosta, Rowe (Zardes 62), Corona (Saief 71), Arriola (Bedoya 72), Dwyer (Morris 76).
Ghana: R Ofori - Sumaila (Opoku 40), Akaminko (Sarfo 81), Boye, Agbenyenu, Acheampong (Poku 71), E Ofori, Abu (Sackey 30), Accam (Agyepong 46), Dwamena (Waris 66), Gyan.

Wednesday, July 26
Jul 26 - Guayaquil
Ecuador 3 (Anangono 19, Gaibor pen 73, Murillo 90+3)
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (C Mitchell 40)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Gambetta (Per)
Ecuador: Dreer (Piedra 81) - Velasco, Aimar, Leon, Cruz, Cortez (Oyola 46), Quinonez (Cevallos 64), Gaibor (Sierra 86), Preciado (Murillo 79), Anangono, Castillo (R Caicedo 68).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Villaroel, Hodge, C Mitchell (N Garcia 46), Gonzales, N Lewis (Arcia 84), Clarke (Plaza 69), Jomal Williams (De Silva 63), Hector (London 84), A Jones, Paul (Charles 84).

Club football

AFRICA

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
May 12: Al Hilal Omdurman (Sud) 1 Al Merreikh (Sud) 1; Etoile Sahel (Tun) 5 Ferroviario Beira (Moz) 0.
May 23: Al Merreikh 1 Etoile Sahel 2; Ferroviario Beira 0 Al Hilal Omdurman 0.
Jun 3: Etoile Sahel 1 Al Hilal Omdurman 1; Ferroviario Beira 1 Al Merreikh 0.
Jun 20: Al Merreikh 2 Ferroviario Beira 1.
Jun 21: Al Hilal Omdurman 1 Etoile Sahel 1.
Jun 30: Al Merreikh 2 Al Hilal Omdurman 1.
Jul 1: Ferroviario Beira 1 Etoile Sahel 1.
Jul 7: Al Hilal Omdurman 0 Ferroviario Beira 3 (awarded[1]); Etoile Sahel 3 Al Merreikh 0 (awarded[1]).
[1]FIFA suspended Sudan's FA before the final round of games were played; this meant Al Hilal Omdurman and Al Merreikh had their remaining game awarded as a 3-0 win to their opponents

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Etoile Sahel (Q)	6	3	3	0	13	4	12
Ferroviario (Q)	6	2	2	2	6	8	8
Al Merreikh	6	2	1	3	6	9	7
Al Hilal Om	6	0	4	2	4	8	4

Group B
May 12: USM Alger (Alg) 3 Al Ahli Tripoli (Lby) 0; Zamalek (Egy) 2 CAPS United (Zim) 0.
May 23: Al Ahli Tripoli 0 Zamalek 0.
May 24: CAPS United 2 USM Alger 1.
Jun 2: CAPS United 2 Al Ahli Tripoli 4; Zamalek 1 USM Alger 1.
Jun 21: Al Ahli Tripoli 4 CAPS United 2; USM Alger 2 Zamalek 0.
Jun 30: Al Ahli Tripoli 1 USM Alger 1.
Jul 2: CAPS United 3 Zamalek 1.
Jul 9: USM Alger 4 CAPS United 1; Zamalek 2 Al Ahli Tripoli 2.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USM Alger (Q)	6	3	2	1	12	5	11
Al Ahli T (Q)	6	2	3	1	11	10	9
Zamalek	6	1	3	2	6	8	6
CAPS United	6	2	0	4	10	16	6

Group C
May 12: Esperance Tunis (Tun) 3 AS Vita (DRC) 1.
May 13: Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 0 Saint George (Eth) 0.
May 23: Saint George (Eth) 0 Esperance Tunis 0.
May 24: AS Vita 1 Mamelodi Sundowns 3.
Jun 2: Mamelodi Sundowns 1 Esperance Tunis 2.
Jun 4: Saint George 1 AS Vita 0.
Jun 20: AS Vita 2 Saint George 1.
Jun 21: Esperance Tunis 0 Mamelodi Sundowns 0.
Jul 1: AS Vita 2 Esperance Tunis 2; Saint George 0 Mamelodi Sundowns 1.
Jul 9: Esperance Tunis 4 Saint George 0; Mamelodi Sundowns 1 AS Vita 1.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance (Q)	6	3	3	0	11	4	12
Mamelodi (Q)	6	2	3	1	6	4	9
Saint George	6	1	2	3	2	7	5
AS Vita	6	1	2	3	7	11	5

Group D
May 12: Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 2 Coton Sport (Cam) 0.
May 13: Al Ahly (Egy) 0 Zanaco (Zam) 0.
May 23: Coton Sport 0 Al Ahly 2.
May 24: Zanaco 1 Wydad Casablanca 0.
Jun 3: Zanaco 2 Coton Sport 1.
Jun 4: Al Ahly 2 Wydad Casablanca 0.
Jun 20: Wydad Casablanca 2 Al Ahly 0.
Jun 21: Coton Sport 0 Zanaco 1.
Jul 1: Coton Sport 0 Wydad Casablanca 2; Zanaco 0 Al Ahly 0.
Jul 8: Al Ahly 3 Coton Sport 1; Wydad Casablanca 1 Zanaco 0.

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wydad (Q)	6	4	0	2	7	3	12
Al Ahly (Q)	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
Zanaco	6	3	2	1	4	2	11
Coton Sport	6	0	0	6	2	12	0

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals draw
Al Ahli Tripoli v Etoile Sahel
Al Ahly v Esperance Tunis
Ferroviario Beira v USM Alger
Mamelodi Sundowns v Wydad Casablanca
1st legs - Sep15-17; 2nd legs - Sep 22-24

CONFEDERATION CUP

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
C Africain (Q)	6	4	0	2	13	6	12
FUS Rabat (Q)	6	3	0	3	9	8	9
KCCA	6	3	0	3	8	12	9
Rivers United	6	2	0	4	6	10	6

Club Africain (Tun), FUS Rabat (Mor), KCCA (Uga), Rivers United (Nga)

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CS Sfaxien (Q)	6	4	1	1	13	4	13
MC Alger (Q)	6	3	2	1	7	7	11
Mb Swallows	6	1	2	3	8	10	5
Platinum Stars	6	0	3	3	6	13	3

CS Sfaxien (Tun), Mbabane Swallows (Swa), MC Alger (Alg), Platinum Stars (SAf)

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zesco Utd (Q)	6	3	1	2	6	5	10
Al Hilal Ob (Q)	6	3	1	2	6	6	10
Recreativo L	6	2	1	3	4	5	7
Smouha	6	1	3	2	5	5	6

Al Hilal Obayed (Sud), Recreativo Libolo (Ang), Smouha (Egy), Zesco United (Zam)

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe (Q)	6	3	3	0	8	4	12
SuperSport (Q)	6	2	4	0	13	8	10
Horoya	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Mounana	6	0	0	6	4	14	0

Horoya (Gui), Mounana (Gab), SuperSport United (SAf), TP Mazembe (DRC)

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the quarter-finals*

Quarter-finals draw
Al Hilal Obayed v TP Mazembe
FUS Rabat v CS Sfaxien
MC Alger v Club Africain
SuperSport United v Zesco United
1st legs - Sep15-17; 2nd legs - Sep 22-24

ALGERIA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ES Setif (C)	30	17	6	7	42	23	57
MC Alger	30	14	8	8	37	26	50
USM Alger	30	14	8	8	50	31	50
Bel Abbes	30	14	6	10	37	33	48
JS Saoura	30	12	9	9	34	30	45
CR Belouizdad	30	12	7	11	30	25	43
Hussein Dey	30	11	7	12	38	37	40
MC Oran	30	9	13	8	24	25	40
Tadjenanet	30	10	9	11	33	32	39
Constantine	30	10	9	11	33	32	39
JS Kabylie	30	8	14	8	20	24	38
Olympique M	30	10	8	12	32	40	38
El Harrach	30	7	15	8	15	21	36
Relizane[1] (R)	30	12	6	12	34	32	36
CA Batna (R)	30	6	7	17	20	42	25
MO Bejaia[2] (R)	30	3	10	17	23	49	18

[1]6pts deducted: 3 for failing to play a game, 3 for failing to pay players
[2]1pt deducted for being reduced to fewer than 7 players in a game

EGYPT

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ahly (C)	34	25	9	0	62	14	84
Misr El Makasa	34	23	5	6	65	34	74
Zamalek[1]	34	20	6	8	42	24	63
Al Masry	34	19	5	10	51	36	62
Smouha	34	15	12	7	49	40	57
Ismaily	34	12	18	4	48	28	54
Al Gaish	34	11	12	11	38	43	45
Al Ittihad	34	12	8	14	34	36	44
Al Mokawloon	34	11	11	12	34	39	44
Petrojet	34	10	13	11	24	26	43
ENPPI	34	9	16	9	45	38	43
Wadi Degla	34	9	11	14	35	38	38
Entag Harby	34	7	12	15	32	40	33
El Dakliyeh	34	7	10	17	31	52	31
Tanta	34	7	10	17	21	39	31
Aswan (R)	34	6	11	17	28	49	29
N Taa'den (R)	34	7	5	22	27	66	26
El Sharkia (R)	34	5	8	21	24	48	23

[1] 3pts deducted for not showing up for a game

ETHIOPIA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St George (C)	30	18	8	4	49	20	62
Dedebit	30	13	12	5	36	22	51
Adama	30	13	12	5	27	17	51
Sidama Coffee	30	13	10	7	30	22	49
Ethiop Coffee	30	12	12	6	36	25	48
Fasil	30	12	7	11	32	30	43
Woldya	30	9	10	11	18	20	37
Defence Force	30	8	13	9	24	35	37
Welayta Dicha	30	9	9	12	24	30	36
Awassa	30	9	8	13	35	37	35
Dire Dawa	30	8	11	11	21	29	35
Arba Minch	30	6	16	8	25	32	34
EEPCO	30	6	15	9	23	24	33
Jimma Aba (R)	30	7	11	12	18	22	32
Com'l Bank (R)	30	7	10	13	27	38	31
Ad's Ababa (R)	30	4	8	18	17	39	20

GAMBIA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Armed F's (C)	22	13	7	2	28	12	46
Marimoo	22	10	9	3	19	11	39
Real Banjul	22	10	8	4	32	20	38
Brikama Utd	22	7	9	6	20	16	30
Hawks	22	7	9	6	22	21	30
GPA	22	6	10	6	20	16	28
Tallinding Utd	22	7	7	8	17	22	28
Bombada	22	6	6	10	30	31	24
Gamtel	22	5	8	9	20	22	23
Steve Biko	22	5	8	9	14	23	23
Serrekunda (R)	22	3	11	8	13	25	20
Samger (R)	22	2	10	10	14	30	16

IVORY COAST

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASEC (C)	26	12	9	5	30	16	45
WAC	26	12	8	6	34	20	44
Tanda	26	10	11	5	24	17	41
Africa Sports	26	11	7	8	22	16	40
AFAD	26	9	12	5	28	22	39
SO Armee	26	9	10	7	21	19	37
Stade Abidjan	26	9	9	8	24	22	36
Sewe Sport	26	10	6	10	25	28	36
San Pedro	26	7	11	8	26	23	32
Indenie	26	6	14	6	16	18	32
Moossou	26	9	5	12	23	28	32
SC Gagnoa	26	8	8	10	17	23	32
Denguele (R)	26	5	10	11	23	33	25
JCAT (R)	26	3	4	19	15	43	13

MAURITIUS

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pamplem's (C)	36	22	7	7	77	40	73
P Riv're Noire	36	22	6	8	63	40	72
Bolton City	36	20	9	7	44	26	69
ASPL 2000	36	19	5	12	66	37	62
Q'tre Bornes	36	14	12	10	42	36	54
Cure Sylv'ter	36	14	6	16	58	45	48
Cercle Joachim	36	12	5	19	46	65	41
Savanne	36	9	8	19	51	76	35
R Rempart (R)	36	8	10	18	40	67	34
GRSE (R)	36	4	4	28	39	94	16

RWANDA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rayon Sp (C)	30	22	7	1	63	20	73
Police	30	17	10	3	50	26	61
APR	30	15	12	3	39	20	57
AS Kigali	30	15	8	7	36	23	53
Bugesera	30	13	11	6	35	22	50
Musanze	30	12	9	9	36	34	45
Etincelles	30	10	10	10	25	29	40
Espoir	30	9	12	9	22	20	39
Sunrise	30	8	9	13	26	31	33
Amagaju	30	9	6	15	25	33	33
Kirehe	30	8	8	14	26	32	32
Mukura	30	8	8	14	28	42	32
Marines	30	8	6	16	25	40	30
Gicumbi	30	7	7	16	27	48	28
Kiyovu Sp (R)	30	6	9	15	29	45	27
Pepinieres (R)	30	3	8	19	21	48	17

SENEGAL

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gen Foot (C)	26	17	6	3	52	23	57
Guediawaye	26	12	8	6	29	22	44
Diambars	26	10	10	6	33	24	40
Jaraaf	26	11	6	9	37	27	39
Casa Sport	26	10	8	8	27	33	38
Niarry Tally	26	9	10	7	31	24	37
M Petite Cote	26	8	9	9	29	37	33
Ouakam	26	7	11	8	22	24	32
Stade Mbour	26	7	9	10	22	24	30
AS Douanes	26	6	11	9	28	33	29
Teungueth	26	6	10	10	24	32	28
Ndiambour	26	6	9	11	26	41	27
Linguere (R)	26	6	8	12	24	32	26
Goree (R)	26	4	11	11	19	27	23

SOUTH AFRICA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bidvest Wits (C)	30	18	6	6	47	22	60
Mamelodi S	30	16	9	5	52	20	57
Cape Town C	30	16	7	7	47	35	55
Kaizer Chiefs	30	13	11	6	39	28	50
SuperSport	30	12	12	6	42	29	48
Polokwane	30	10	13	7	36	34	43
Maritzburg	30	9	11	10	31	35	38
Gold Arrows	30	10	8	12	32	44	38
Platinum St's	30	9	10	11	33	32	37
Aj Cape Town	30	9	9	12	29	35	36
Orlando P'tes	30	6	15	9	29	40	33
Bloemfontein	30	5	14	11	16	28	29
Chippa Utd	30	6	10	14	27	32	28
Free State S	30	6	10	14	26	37	28
Baroka[1]	30	5	13	12	26	43	28
Highlands (R)	30	5	12	13	26	44	27

[1] Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off group

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals draw

Al Ain (UAE) v Al Hilal (Sau)
Kawasaki Frontale (Jap) v Urawa Red Diamonds (Jap)
Persepolis (Irn) v Al Ahli (Sau)
Shanghai SIPG (Chn) v Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn)

1st legs - Aug 21-23; 2nd legs - Sep11-13

AFC CUP

WEST ASIA ZONE

AFC CUP – WEST ASIA ZONE – GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Zawra'a (Q)	6	3	3	0	9	3	12
Al Jaish	6	3	0	3	6	9	9
Al Ahli	6	1	3	2	5	6	6
Al Suwaiq	6	1	2	3	3	5	5

Al Ahli (Jor), Al Jaish (Syr), Al Suwaiq (Oma), Al Zawra'a (Irq)

AFC CUP – WEST ASIA ZONE – GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Q Jawiya (Q)	6	3	3	0	6	2	12
Al Wahda (Q)	6	3	2	1	10	3	11
Al Hidd	6	3	0	3	8	5	9
Safa	6	0	1	5	1	15	1

Al Hidd (Bhr), Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq), Al Wahda (Syr), Safa (Leb)

AFC CUP – WEST ASIA ZONE – GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Wehdat (Q)	6	3	3	0	9	6	12
Al Muharraq	6	3	1	2	9	8	10
Saham	6	2	1	3	9	9	7
Al Nejmeh	6	1	1	4	5	9	4

Al Muharraq (Bhr), Al Nejmeh (Leb), Al Wehdat (Jor), Saham (Oma)

● *The group winners and the runner-up with the best record qualified for the semi-finals*

West Asia Zone semi-finals

Al Quwa Al Jawiya v Al Zawra'a 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
Al Wahda v Al Wehdat 4-1, 0-1 (agg 4-2)

CENTRAL ASIA ZONE

AFC CUP – CENTRAL ASIA ZONE – GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Istiklol (Q)	6	5	1	0	15	4	16
Altyn Asyr	6	4	1	1	12	4	13
Dordoi	6	1	0	5	6	16	3
Alay	6	1	0	5	9	18	3

Alay (Kyr), Altyn Asyr (Tkm), Dordoi (Kyr), Istiklol (Taj)

SOUTH ASIA ZONE

AFC CUP – SOUTH ASIA ZONE – GP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bengaluru (Q)	6	4	0	2	7	6	12
Maziya	6	4	0	2	10	4	12
Mohun Bagan	6	2	1	3	10	11	7
Abahani D	6	1	1	4	4	10	4

Abahani Dhaka (Ban), Bengaluru (Ind), Maziya (Mdv), Mohun Bagan (Ind)

ASEAN ZONE

AFC CUP – ASEAN ZONE – GP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Global (Q)	6	5	0	1	13	9	15
Johor DT (Q)	6	4	1	1	16	5	13
Boeung Ket	6	1	1	4	3	12	4
Magwe	6	0	2	4	5	11	2

Boeung Ket (Cmb), Global (Phi), Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mly), Magwe (Mym)

AFC CUP – ASEAN ZONE – GP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ceres (Q)	6	3	2	1	16	8	11
Ha Noi	6	3	2	1	14	10	11
Tampines	6	2	0	4	8	17	6
Felda United	6	1	2	3	7	10	5

Ceres (Phi), Felda United (Mly), Ha Noi (Vie), Tampines Rovers (Sin)

AFC CUP – ASEAN ZONE – GP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Home Utd (Q)	4	3	0	1	12	8	9
Than Quang N	4	1	1	2	10	9	4
Yadanarbon	4	1	1	2	3	8	4

Home United (Sin), Than Quang Ninh (Vie), Yadanarbon (Mym)

● *The group winners and the runner-up with the best record qualified for the semi-finals*

ASEAN Zone semi-finals

Global v Home United 2-2, 2-3 (agg 4-5)
Johor Darul Ta'zim v Ceres 3-2, 1-2 (agg 4-4, Ceres on away goals)

EAST ASIA ZONE

AFC CUP – EAST ASIA ZONE – GP I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
April 25 (Q)	4	2	2	0	14	3	8
Kigwancha	4	2	2	0	13	3	8
Erchim	4	0	0	4	0	21	0

April 25 (NKo), Erchim (Mon), Kigwancha (NKo)

● *The West Asia Zone semi-finals winners meet in a play-off, the winner of which qualifies for the AFC Cup Final; the ASEAN Zone semi-finals winners meet in a play-off, the winner of which enters the Inter-Zone semi-finals, along with the 3 group winners from the Central, South and East Asia Zones. The winner of the Inter-Zone Final qualifies for the AFC Cup Final*

MACAU

2017 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica (C)	18	15	2	1	80	7	47
Monte Carlo	18	15	1	2	72	23	46
Chao Pak Kei	18	14	1	3	55	16	43
Kei Lun	18	8	3	7	46	32	27
Cheng Fung	18	5	8	5	34	42	23
Tak Chun Ka I	18	6	4	8	31	42	22
Sporting	18	4	4	10	16	49	16
Policia	18	2	5	11	11	42	11
Lai Chi (R)	18	2	3	13	17	68	9
Develop'nt (R)	18	2	3	13	19	60	9

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st qualifying round

1st legs - Jun 27/28; 2nd legs - Jul 4

Alashkert (Arm) v FC Santa Coloma (And) 1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1); Hibernians (Mlt) v Infonet (Est) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0); Linfield (NI) v La Fiorita (SaM) 1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0); The New Saints (Wal) v Europa (Gib) 1-2, 3-1 (aet) (agg 4-3); Vikingur (Far) v Trepca '89 (Kos) 2-1, 4-1 (agg 6-2)

2nd qualifying round

(teams with country abbreviation entered at this stage)

1st legs - Jul11-14; 2nd legs - Jul18/19

APOEL Nicosia (Cyp) v F91 Dudelange (Lux) 1-0, 1-0 (agg 2-0); BATE Borisov (Bls) v Alashkert 1-1, 3-1 (agg 4-2); Dundalk (RoI) v Rosenborg (Nor) 1-1, 1-2 (aet) (agg 2-3); FH (Ice) v Vikingur 1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1); Hapoel Beer Sheva (Isr) v Honved (Hun) 2-1, 3-2 (agg 5-3); Hibernians v Salzburg (Aut) 0-3, 0-3 (agg 0-6); Linfield v Celtic (Sco) 0-2, 0-4 (agg 0-6); Malmo (Swe) v Vardar Skopje (Mac) 1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4); Mariehamn (Fin) v Legia Warsaw (Pol) 0-3, 0-6 (agg 0-9); Qarabag (Aze) v Samtredia (Geo) 5-0, 1-0 (agg 6-0); Partizan Belgrade (Ser) v Buducnost (Mne) 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0); Rijeka (Cro) v The New Saints 2-0, 5-1 (agg 7-1); Sheriff (Mol) v Kukesi (Alb) 1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2, Sheriff on away goals); Spartaks Jurmala (Lat) v Astana (Kaz) 0-1, 1-1 (agg 1-2); Zalgiris Vilnius (Lit) v Ludogorets (Bul) 2-1, 1-4 (agg 3-5); Zilina (Slk) v Copenhagen (Den) 1-3, 2-1 (agg 3-4); Zrinjski (Bos) v Maribor (Sln) 1-2, 1-1 (agg 2-3)

EUROPA LEAGUE

1st qualifying round

1st legs - Jun 29; 2nd legs - Jul 4/6

AEK Larnaca (Cyp) v Lincoln Red Imps (Gib) 5-0, 1-1 (agg 6-1); Bala Town (Wal) v Vaduz (Lie) 1-2, 0-3 (agg 1-5); Beitar Jerusalem (Isr) v Vasas (Hun) 4-3, 3-0 (agg 7-3); Chikhura (Geo) v Altach (Aut) 0-1, 1-1 (agg 1-2); Connah's Quay Nomads (Wal) v HJK Helsinki (Fin) 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3); Crusaders (NI) v FK Liepaja (Lat) 3-1, 0-2 (agg 3-3, FK Liepaja on away goals); Dinamo Batumi (Geo) v Jagiellonia (Pol) 0-1, 0-4 (agg 0-5); Dinamo Minsk (Bls) v NSI (Far) 2-1, 2-0 (agg 4-1); Domzale (Sln) v Flora Tallinn (Est) 2-0, 3-2 (agg 5-2); Ferencvaros (Hun) v Jelgava (Lat) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0); Fola Esch (Lux) v Milsami (Mol) 2-1, 1-1 (agg 3-2); Haugesund (Nor) v Coleraine (NI) 7-0, 0-0 (agg 7-0); Irtysh (Kaz) v Dunav (Bul) 1-0, 2-0 (agg 3-0); Kairat (Kaz) v Atlantas (Lit) 6-0, 2-1 (agg 8-1); KI (Far) v AIK (Swe) 0-0, 0-5 (agg 0-5); KR (Ice) v SJK (Fin) 0-0, 2-0 (agg 2-0); Lech Poznan (Pol) v Pelister (Mac) 4-0, 3-0 (agg 7-0); Levadia (Est) v Cork City (RoI) 0-2, 2-4 (agg 2-6); Levski Sofia (Bul) v Sutjeska (Mne) 3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1); Lyngby (Den) v Bangor City (Wal) 1-0, 3-0 (agg 4-0); Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) v FK Tirana (Alb) 2-0, 3-0 (agg 5-0); Midtjylland (Den) v Derry City (NI) 6-1, 4-1 (agg 10-2); Mladost Lucani (Ser) v Inter Baku (Aze) 0-3, 0-2 (agg 0-5); Mladost Podgorica (Mne) v Gandzasar (Arm) 1-0, 3-0 (agg 4-0); Nomme Kalju (Est) v B36 (Far) 2-1, 2-1 (agg 4-2); Norrkoping (Swe) v Prishtina (Kos) 5-0, 1-0 (agg 6-0); Odd (Nor) v Ballymena United (NI) 3-0, 2-0 (agg 5-0); Partizani (Alb) v Botev Plovdiv (Bul) 1-3, 0-1 (agg 1-4); Pyunik (Arm) v Slovan Bratislava (Slk) 1-4, 0-5 (agg 1-9); Rangers (Sco) v Progres Niederkorn (Lux) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Red Star Belgrade (Ser) v Floriana (Mlt) 3-0, 3-3 (agg 6-3); Shakhtyor (Bls) v Suduva (Lit) 0-0, 1-2 (agg 1-2); Shirak (Arm) v Gorica (Sln) 0-2, 2-2 (agg 2-4); Shkendija (Mac) v Dacia (Mol) 3-0, 4-0 (agg 7-0); Siroki Brijeg (Bos) v Ordabasy (Kaz) 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0); Skenderbeu (Alb) v Sant Julia (And) 1-0, 5-0 (agg 6-0); St Johnstone (Sco) v Trakai (Lit) 1-2, 0-1 (agg 1-3); St Joseph's (Gib) v AEL Limassol (Cyp) 0-4, 0-6 (agg 0-10); Stjarnan (Ice) v Shamrock Rovers (RoI) 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2); Tre Penne (SaM) v Rabotnicki (Mac) 0-1, 0-6 (agg 0-7); Trencin (Slk) v Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo) 5-1, 3-0 (agg 8-1); UE Santa Coloma (And) v Osijek (Cro) 0-2, 0-4 (agg 0-6); Valletta (Mlt) v Folgore (SaM) 2-0, 1-0 (agg 3-0); Ventspils (Lat) v Valur (Ice) 0-0, 0-1 (agg 0-1); Videoton (Hun) v Balzan (Mlt) 2-0, 3-3 (agg 5-3); Vojvodina (Ser) v Ruzomberok (Slk) 2-1, 0-2 (agg 2-3); VPS (Fin) v Olimpija (Sln) 1-0, 1-0 (agg 2-0); Zaria (Mol) v Sarajevo

(Bos) 2-1, 1-2 (aet) (agg 3-3, Zaria 6-5 on pens); Zeljeznicar (Bos) v Zeta (Mne) 1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2); Zira (Aze) v Differdange (Lux) 2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1)

2nd qualifying round

(teams with country abbreviation entered at this stage)

1st legs - Jul12/13; 2nd legs - Jul 20

Aberdeen (Sco) v Siroki Brijeg 1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1); Altach v Dinamo Brest (Bls) 1-1, 3-0 (agg 4-1); Apollon Limassol (Cyp) v Zaria 3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1); Astra (Rom) v Zira 3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1); Beitar Jerusalem v Botev Plovdiv 1-1, 0-4 (agg 1-5); Brondby (Den) v VPS 2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2); Cork City v AEK Larnaca 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2); Ferencvaros v Midtjylland 2-4, 1-3 (agg 3-7); FK Liepaja v Suduva 0-2, 1-0 (agg 1-2); Hajduk Split (Cro) v Levski Sofia 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1); Haugesund v Lech Poznan 3-2, 0-2 (agg 3-4); Inter Baku v Fola Esch 1-0, 1-4 (agg 2-4); Irtysh v Red Star Belgrade 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3); Kairat v Skenderbeu 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3); Maccabi Tel Aviv v KR 3-1, 2-0 (agg 5-1); Nomme Kalju v Videoton 0-3, 1-1 (agg 1-4); Norrkoping v Trakai 2-1, 1-2 (aet) (agg 3-3, Trakai 5-3 on pens); Osijek v Lucerne (Swi) 2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2); Ostersund (Swe) v Galatasaray (Tur) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1); Panionios (Gre) v Gorica 2-0, 3-2 (agg 5-2); Progres Niederkorn v AEL Limassol 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3); Qabala (Aze) v Jagiellonia 1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1); Rabotnicki v Dinamo Minsk 1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4); Ruzomberok v Brann (Nor) 0-1, 2-0 (agg 2-1); Shamrock Rovers v Mlada Boleslav (CzR) 2-3, 0-2 (agg 2-5); Shkendija v HJK Helsinki 3-1, 1-1 (agg 4-2); Slovan Bratislava v Lyngby 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3); Sturm Graz (Aut) v Mladost Podgorica 0-1, 3-0 (agg 3-1); Trencin v Bnei Yehuda (Isr) 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3); Vaduz v Odd 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2); Valletta v Utrecht (Hol) 0-0, 1-3 (agg 1-3); Valur v Domzale 1-2, 2-3 (agg 3-5); Zeljeznicar v AIK 0-0, 0-2 (agg 0-2)

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Jnrs (C)	30	18	9	3	62	25	63
River Plate	30	16	8	6	51	28	56
Estudiantes	30	16	8	6	46	26	56
Racing	30	17	4	9	51	40	55
Banfield	30	17	3	10	42	35	54
Independiente	30	14	11	5	39	23	53
San Lorenzo	30	16	5	9	46	35	53
Lanus	30	14	8	8	36	25	50
Newell's	30	14	7	9	40	30	49
Def y Justicia	30	14	7	9	31	23	49
Colon	30	14	7	9	32	25	49
Rosario	30	11	11	8	40	31	44
Gimnasia LP	30	12	7	11	26	24	43
Godoy Cruz	30	13	4	13	34	34	43
Talleres	30	11	9	10	35	30	42
Olimpo	30	9	11	10	37	32	38
At Rafaela (R)[1]	30	10	7	13	31	30	37
Temperley	30	10	7	13	30	38	37
Velez Sarsfield	30	10	7	13	31	40	37
Patronato	30	8	10	12	30	40	34
Atl Tucuman	30	8	9	13	34	40	33
San Martin	30	7	12	11	27	40	33
Union	30	8	8	14	25	39	32
Tigre	30	8	7	15	33	43	31
Huracan	30	6	11	13	23	30	29
Sarmiento (R)[1]	30	7	7	16	31	51	28
Arsenal	30	7	6	17	27	50	27
Belgrano	30	5	11	14	21	34	26
Quilmes (R)[1]	30	6	7	17	18	43	25
Aldosivi (R)[1]	30	5	10	15	15	40	25

[1]*Relegation decided by points-per-game average over the 4 most recent seasons*

BOLIVIA

2017 – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar (C)	22	16	2	4	59	16	50
The Strongest	22	13	2	7	47	31	41
Guabira	22	12	3	7	44	31	39
Oriente	22	11	4	7	40	31	37
Blooming	22	11	1	10	39	50	34
Nacional	22	10	3	9	37	35	33
San Jose	22	7	7	8	33	32	28
Sport Boys	22	8	4	10	41	50	28
Real Potosi	22	8	1	13	30	50	25
Wilstermann	22	6	5	11	26	34	23
Petrolero	22	5	5	12	36	51	20
Universitario	22	5	3	14	21	42	18

COLOMBIA

2017 Apertura Championship Final

1st leg - Jun14; 2nd leg - Jun18

Deportivo Cali v Atletico Nacional
2-0, 1-5 (agg 3-5)

ECUADOR

2017 – 1ST STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Delfin[1]	22	13	8	1	35	14	47
Emelec	22	9	11	2	32	21	38
Independiente	22	10	7	5	27	19	37
Macara	22	9	6	7	29	30	33
Barcelona[2]	22	12	5	5	36	21	35
Cuenca	22	7	8	7	24	23	29
Univ Catolica	22	7	7	8	33	26	28
Guayaquil City	22	6	8	8	20	25	26
El Nacional	22	5	8	9	27	36	23
LDU Quito	22	3	10	9	25	32	19
F'za Amarilla	22	2	10	10	17	31	16
Clan Juvenil	22	2	6	14	19	46	12

[1]*Delfin will meet the 2nd stage winners in a play-off for the 2017 championship*
[2]*6pts deducted for failing to make payment for a player*

PARAGUAY

2017 – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad (C)	22	15	4	3	40	14	49
Guarani	22	15	3	4	48	31	48
Olimpia	22	9	9	4	32	23	36
Cerro Porteno	22	11	2	9	26	26	35
Sol America	22	8	10	4	31	17	34
Independiente	22	7	8	7	27	27	29
General Diaz	22	6	7	9	22	32	25
Capiata	22	7	3	12	21	31	24
Nacional	22	5	8	9	24	30	23
Rubio Nu	22	4	8	10	25	35	20
Luqueno	22	3	8	11	21	33	17
Trinidense	22	1	12	9	23	41	15

VENEZUELA

2017 Apertura Tournament Final

1st leg - Jun 25; 2nd leg - Jul 2

Monagas v Caracas 1-0, 1-2
(agg 2-2, Monagas on away goals)

CONCACAF

ARUBA

2016-17 Championship Final

(best of 3 legs)

1st leg - Jun 27; 2nd leg - Jul1; 3rd leg - Jul 4

RCA v Nacional 1-3, 6-2, 1-3 (Nacional 2 legs to 1)

CANADA

2017 Championship Final

1st leg - Jun 21; 2nd leg - Jun 27

Montreal Impact v Toronto 1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3)

CAYMAN ISLANDS

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bodden T (C)	21	15	2	4	33	21	47
Elite	21	10	6	5	39	24	36
Scholars Intl	21	8	7	6	29	16	31
Academy	21	9	4	8	28	29	31
Latinos	21	5	9	7	27	27	24
Roma United[1]	21	8	3	10	28	31	24
Sunset[2]	21	7	1	13	26	45	22
Caym'n Ath (R)	21	4	4	13	22	39	16

[1]*3pts deducted*
[2]*Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off*

CUBA

2017 – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santiago (C)	10	6	4	0	20	8	22
Camaguey[1]	9	5	3	1	22	8	18
Ciego de Avila	10	5	1	4	18	11	16
Villa Clara	10	3	3	4	12	15	12
Cienfuegos	10	2	1	7	11	24	7
Las Tunas[1]	9	2	0	7	7	24	6

[1]*Remaining game not played - result deemed irrelevant*

EL SALVADOR

2016-17 Clausura Championship Final

May 21: Alianza 0 Santa Tecla 4.

FRENCH GUIANA

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
US Matoury (C)	22	16	3	3	67	21	73
Remire	22	14	3	5	48	31	67
Le Geldar[2]	22	12	5	5	52	21	62
CSC Cayenne[2]	22	12	4	6	41	39	61
Agouado[3]	22	11	5	6	49	35	58
Etoile	22	9	8	5	36	23	57
Kourou	22	10	4	8	43	32	56
Grand Santi	22	10	3	9	32	29	55
Kouroucien[2]	22	6	3	13	37	54	42
Olympique	22	4	2	16	30	68	36
Macouria[3] (R)	22	4	2	16	23	78	34
Cosma[2] (R)	22	2	2	18	15	42	29

[1]*4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat*
[2]*1pt deducted*
[3]*2pts deducted*

GUADELOUPE

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
Unite St R (C)	26	17	6	3	48	19	83
Moulien	26	12	8	6	30	16	70
Amical GBMG	26	12	8	6	32	25	70
Baie-Mahault	26	12	7	7	31	23	69
La Gauloise[2]	26	13	5	8	31	21	67
Arsenal	26	9	8	9	30	28	61
Capesterrien	26	9	8	9	34	35	61
Siroco[3]	26	10	5	11	32	33	60
Phare Canal	26	8	6	12	26	31	56
Juventus[3]	26	8	6	12	25	34	55
Bananier	26	7	7	12	26	38	54
Gourb'ne[3] (R)	26	7	7	12	19	34	53
Gosier (R)	26	5	8	13	17	31	49
Red Star[3] (R)	26	6	5	15	20	33	48

[1]*4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat*
[2]*3pts deducted*
[3]*1pt deducted*

HAITI

2017 Ouverture (opening) Championship Final

1st leg - Jun 21; 2nd leg - Jun 25

Racing Gonaives v Real Hope 2-1, 0-1
(agg 2-2, Real Hope on away goals)

JAMAICA

2016-17 Championship Final

Jun 5: Arnett Gardens 2 Portmore United 1.

ST KITTS & NEVIS

2016-17 Championship Final

(best of 3 legs)

1st leg - Jun11; 2nd leg - Jun14

Cayon Rockets v Garden Hotspurs
2-0, 1-0 (Cayon 2 legs to 0)

SURINAM

2016-17 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leo Victor[1]	22	15	4	3	49	20	49
Inter M'poe[1]	22	15	4	3	47	19	49
WBC	22	14	5	3	58	32	47
Robinhood	22	12	7	3	59	29	43
Nishan 42	22	7	9	6	34	33	30
Transvaal	22	8	5	9	28	30	29
Botopasi	22	8	3	11	40	40	27
Voorwaarts	22	8	3	11	26	37	27
PVV	22	5	5	12	31	50	20
Jong Rambaan	22	5	4	13	32	58	19
Notch	22	5	3	14	22	47	18
SNL	22	3	2	17	17	48	11

[1]*Entered championship decider after finishing level on points*

2016-17 Championship Decider

Jun 17: Leo Victor 1 Inter Moengotapoe 2.

OCEANIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (Premier League)

2017 Championship Final

Jun 17: Hekari United 4 Papaka 1.

TAHITI

2016-17 Championship Final

May 28: Venus 0 Dragon 2.

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage

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World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

APRIL 7, 1999, KIEV: CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMI-FINAL 1ST LEG

Dynamo Kiev 3 Bayern Munich 3

Kiev open up a big lead and then miss golden opportunity to score a fourth goal before Bayern hit back to reach the Final

Handful...Carsten Jancker

Coached by that wily old fox Valeriy Lobanovskyi, Dynamo Kiev came tantalisingly close to dumping Bayern Munich out of the Champions League semi-finals before the return leg in Germany had even been played.

Leading 3-1 with an hour gone, Kiev winger Vitaliy Kosovskyi was through one-on-one with only Oliver Kahn to beat. However, despite having plenty of time to place his shot past the Bayern goalkeeper, Kosovskyi opted instead to chip the German – and he could only watch helplessly as his shot sailed agonisingly over the crossbar with 88,000 fans in the old, open Olympic Stadium holding their breath.

Two goals from Andriy Shevchenko had put Kiev on their way before the visitors pulled a goal back through Michael Tarnat on the stroke of half-time. Five minutes after the re-start, Kosovskyi restored the two-goal advantage before he then missed that glorious opportunity to put the result beyond doubt.

Realising they had been let off the hook, Bayern hit back with a curled free-kick from Steffen Effenberg. Playing as a sweeper, Bayern's Lothar Matthaus then had to clear a header off the line before Carsten Jancker scored the German's equaliser two minutes from time.

Solid...Bayern clear their lines

Back home in Bavaria, Bayern offered the Ukrainian side very few chances to grab an away goal and the hosts won 1-0 to go through.

In the Final, Bayern met Manchester United in Barcelona and conceded two late goals themselves, with United scoring twice in injury time to win 2-1. WS

Referee: Nielsen (Den)

KEY MOMENTS

Free-kick...Michael Tarnat pulls a goal back

16min Valyantsin Belkevich hits a superb pass to Andriy Shevchenko, who beats Markus Babbel and side-foots past Oliver Kahn. **1-0**

32min Following a corner, Sammy Kuffour gets in a header that is scrambled off the line by the Kiev defence.

43min A Shevchenko free-kick is whipped in and evades Kahn to creep inside the far post. **2-0**

45min With a long run-up, Michael Tarnat strikes a swerving free-kick beyond Oleksandr Shovkovskiy. **2-1**

50min Following a mistake by Kuffour, Vitaliy Kosovskyi volleys home to restore the host's two-goal advantage. **3-1**

60min Kosovskyi is played in, but with only Kahn to beat he chips narrowly over the bar.

78min Steffen Effenberg scores from a free-kick. **3-2**

86min A diving header from Sergei Rebrov is hooked off the line by Lothar Matthaus.

88min Carsten Jancker turns Oleksandr Holovko superbly as he shoots past Shovkovskiy. **3-3**

Hero then villain...Vitaliy Kosovskyi

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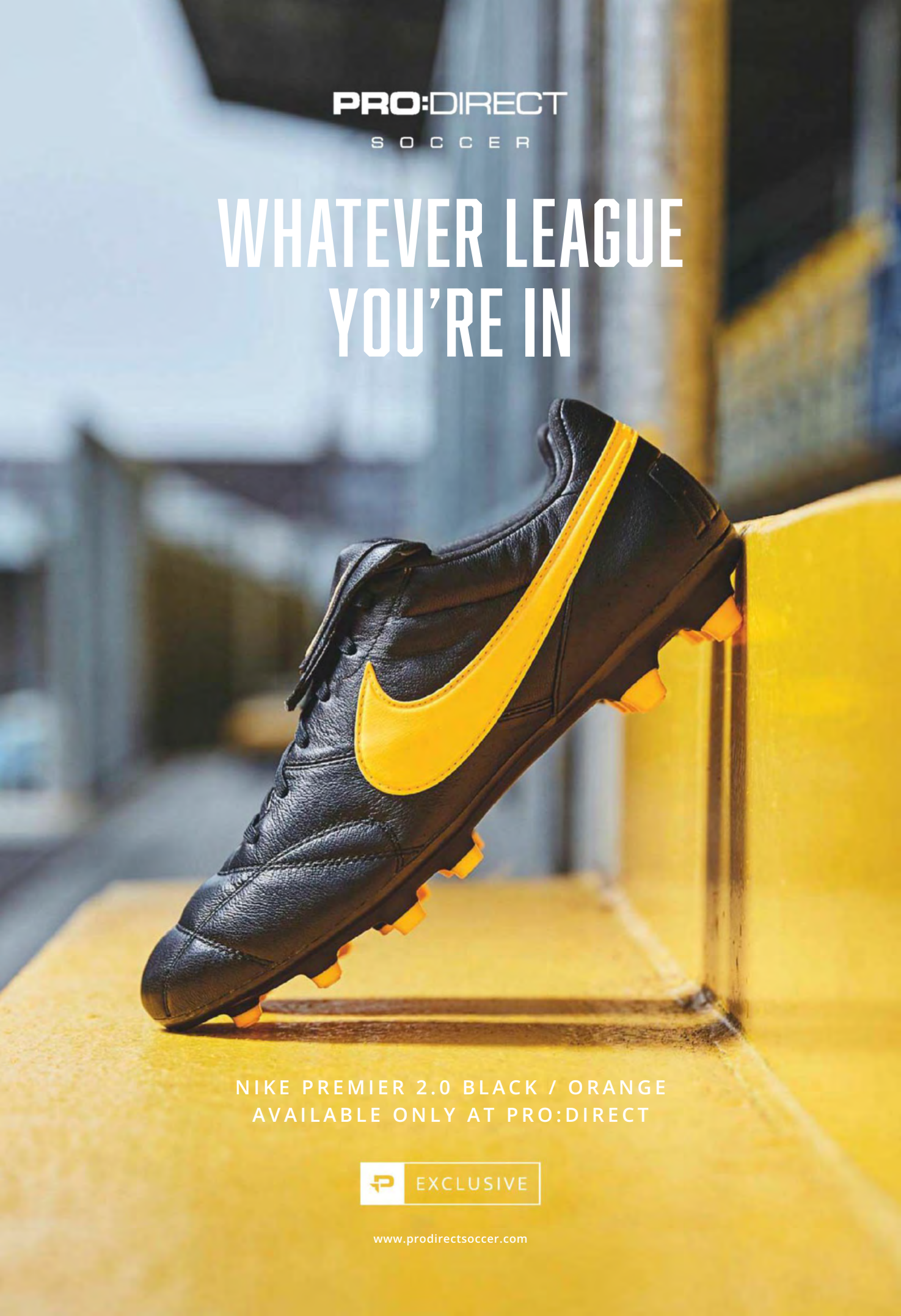
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